

TRANSFORMATIONS IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS, CONFLICTS, REGIONALISM, AND LATIN AMERICA

Edited by

Livia Peres Milani

Karina Lilia Pasquariello Mariano

Samuel Alves Soares



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Lívia Peres Milani
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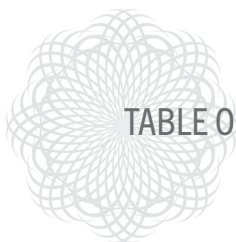


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NINE YEARS AFTER THE ADOPTION OF THE 2030 Agenda by the United Nations General Assembly, international politics faces abundant challenges that pose a risk to the implementation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Structural obstacles to development, rising inequality within and between countries, drawbacks in the democratic institutions, obstructions to international cooperation and regionalism, a global pandemic, armed conflicts, and interstate wars have defined such a period. As a developing region, Latin America is profoundly affected by these global dynamics, but also encounters specific challenges. Considering this context, this book analyzes global and regional challenges to peace, prosperity, and sustainable development, building on International Relations (IR) literature and focusing on the Latin American context.

The main purpose of this book is to discuss themes related to transformations in international relations, especially in the security and regionalism dimensions, which influence Latin America. These themes are central to the Development, International Politics and

Peace Network (DIPP Network), formed from our CAPES PrInt project, which was the starting point of the idea for this book. Said project builds upon the two lines of concentrations of the Graduate Program in International Relations “San Tiago Dantas” (Unesp/Unicamp/PUC-SP), which are “Institutions, Process and Actors” and “Peace, Defense and Security”. The texts are the results of the research we have developed. Twenty-four researchers from several universities that are part of the project are articulated into the construction of this book. The chapters reflect the plurality of perspectives that define the DIPP Network and several of them articulate with the Sustainable Development Goals.

DIPP Network’s objective is to discuss political, cultural, social and economic processes that affect the development of the world order. The international dimension, the construction of a resilient world order, is essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, as recognized by the 2015 General Assembly Resolution. However, nowadays we witness the growth of rivalries between states, challenges to democracy and plural societies, as well as increasing state and non-state violence, and regional fragmentation (Mariano, Bressan, and Luciano, 2021; Neocleous, 2011; Xing and Bernal-Meza, 2021). It is crucial to analyze those processes from plural perspectives.

The book covers two crucial dimensions identified in the 2015 Resolution: international partnership; and peace and security. The chapters analyze challenges, obstacles, and advancements for “peaceful, just and inclusive societies” in Latin America and elsewhere, recognizing the interconnections between peace, security and development (United Nations, 2015). Moreover, the volume addresses the current state of incorporation of the SDGs by Latin American regional organizations, considering the fragilities and expansions of regional cooperation, and their relevance for the construction of international cooperation.

As pointed out by Weiland et al. (2021, p.91), the “2030 Agenda and the SDGs serve as a global reference point for the transition

to sustainable development". The framework was set up starting with the 70/1 General Assembly Resolution, which institutes the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 sub-targets, understood as integrated and indivisible and based on the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The resolution recognizes the interdependence between peace, security, and development, as well as the need to improve international cooperation for the implementation of said goals. The UN Member states also reinforce the importance of regional and sub-regional frameworks for the translation of global targets into national and local policies (United Nations, 2015).

Our discussion mainly relates to Goal 16: "promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels" (United Nations, 2015, p.25). Therefore, the chapters promote reflections on the diverse manifestations of violence, including abuse of violence by state actors, post-conflict realities, and the interconnections between gender equality and security. We also promote broad discussions on the participation of Latin American countries in international governance, mainly via regional organizations, international cooperation, and South-South arrangements.

Furthermore, the chapters also engage in themes relating to other goals, such as achieving gender equality (SDG 5), promoting sustainable and inclusive economic growth (SDG 8), building industry, innovation, and infrastructure (SDG 9), reducing inequalities within and between countries (SDG 10), and Global Partnership (SDG 17). Accordingly, we recognize the interconnection among the goals and the need to achieve all of them for the construction of peaceful and prosperous societies.

The book is divided into three sections: the first one is dedicated to analyzing global phenomena that impose barriers to peace and prosperity, as well as their regional impacts. This section is composed

of chapters that debate technological advancements and their consequences for liberalism and processes of securitization, inequalities in the international system, neo-patriotic far-right movements, and U.S.-China rivalries and their consequences for Latin America. The second section is composed of chapters that analyze the regional institutions in Latin America; in these chapters, there is a focus on Latin American regionalism, debating the incorporation of the SDG by such organizations, and evaluating the crisis and advancements of regional cooperation. The third section gathers chapters that discuss conflicts and security in Latin America, including the relations between gender and security, peace processes, and security practices.

The first chapter is “Inequalities, capitalism, political regimes, and the system of international relations”, by João Paulo Avelãs Nunes and António Rafael Amaro. The authors discuss the narratives on inequality present in the academic production in humanities, social sciences, and technologies, and examine the modern and post-modern epistemological paradigm in social sciences. The authors question the view of capitalism as essentially prone to growing inequalities and discrimination. They claim that the readings of reality that usually resign to the impossibilities of promoting social changes and reducing inequalities tend to overlook theoretical and empirical alternatives, ignoring the reformist contributions of the neo-modern paradigm.

The next chapter assesses how the technological advancements in contemporary capitalism have affected the security dimension. In the chapter “Automating perception: threats, communication, and securitization”, Héctor Luis Saint-Pierre and David P. Succi Junior debate the effects of artificial intelligence on processes of securitization. The authors point out that the incorporation of artificial intelligence for the identification of threats in surveillance and weapon systems is producing changes in the communication process embedded in securitization. Artificial intelligence alters the dynamics articulated to the identification of threats, influencing security

policies and decisions to use force. The authors also present a compelling discussion, defining threat as the relationship between a signal and its perception within social dynamics. Artificial intelligence claims of threats are socially constructed as creditable due to the narrative which interprets them as scientific and technical.

After the discussion on technology, the structural dimensions of capitalism and corresponding inequalities, the subsequent chapters discuss contemporary phenomena that affect the construction of global partnership, plural societies, peace, and development. The chapter “Neo-patriotic far-right movements: conceptual definitions, cases, and analytical challenges”, by José Antonio Sanahuja and Camilo López Burian, investigates the analytical challenges posed by the surge of far-right movements. After a comprehensive literature review and drawing from the neo-Gramscian critical theory of IR, they argue for the definition of such movements as composing the “neo-patriotic far right” framed as a minimal conceptual definition. They point out that these heterogeneous movements are united by the naturalization of inequalities and the rejection of norms and institutions that compose the international liberal order. Both characteristics are the lowest common denominators that define such movements. They also explore examples from Latin America, highlighting that, in 2021, many people in the region lived under far-right governments and, in many other places, there was an increased political influence of such groups.

Closing the section on global dynamics and challenges, Livia Peres Milani and Matheus de Oliveira Pereira debate the effects of Chinese economic growth over Latin American development. The chapter investigates the meanings of China’s rise in Inter-American Relations and the perspectives it poses for Latin America. The authors argue that cautiousness is key to analyzing this process, in order to not underestimate the continuous U.S. regional influence or overstate the positive impacts of China’s rise on Latin American countries. They present a literature review on the U.S.-China

strategic competition, conceptualized as a hegemonic dispute, and data on both countries' arms transfers and trade with Latin America. They conclude that trade ties with Beijing reinforce traditional dependence dynamics – as shown by the exportation of commodities – while the United States maintains a significant part of its power, especially in the military dimension.

The section on Latin American regional institutions starts with a discussion on the current stagnation of regionalism. The chapter “Regionalism, institutional crisis, and subnational integration: (dis)continuities in a fragmented South America” by Cairo Gabriel Borges Junqueira, Barbara Carvalho Neves, and Luan Oliveira Pessoa analyzes regional fragmentation processes in South America. The authors suggest that the regionalism crisis makes it harder for South American countries to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They analyze the dismantling of regional forums in South America, but also stress markers of resilience, arguing that subnational actors are assuming significant roles in the promotion and maintenance of regionalism. They contextualize the contemporary dynamics of South American regionalism and present analytical and empirical markers for understating the action of subnational governments to promote regionalism. Additionally, the chapter maps subnational initiatives for the construction of regional infrastructure, needed for socio-economic development and to mitigate existent asymmetries. This discussion dialogues with SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure).

Following that, Bruno Theodoro Luciano, Regiane Nitsch Bresan, and Marcus Maurer de Salles investigate the incorporation of the 2030 Agenda into Mercosur's institutions. They analyze agendas and work programs of Mercosur's bodies, and investigate how the UN-promoted goals influenced the formulation of Mercosur's Association Agreement with the European Union. They highlight the increasing mentions of SDGs in Mercosur's official documents, as well as the principles and goals present in the Trade and

Sustainable Development chapter of the EU-Mercosur agreement. In addition, the authors comment on the institutional fragilities in Mercosur that hinder the SDGs incorporation process. Conversely, they comment that existing concerns about environmental policies prevented the inter-bloc treaty ratification. This discussion dialogues with SDG 17 (Global Partnership).

In the following chapter, Heitor Erthal and João Victor da Motta Baptista reflect upon the impacts of the 2030 Agenda on Mercosur cooperation practices, emphasizing the relevance of South-South cooperation. They discuss the concept and the history of South-South cooperation and its advancements and limitations in Mercosur, which has embraced the SDGs agenda. The authors also analyze the limits of the 2030 Agenda in the promotion of development in Latin America and explore the potentiality of South-South cooperation. They highlight some of the contradictions in the 2030 Agenda, which is promoted as an agenda for development and equality, but was built vertically, from the Global North to the Global South, and reiterates neoliberal policies. Therefore, it imposes constraints for the construction of autonomous policies by peripheral states.

The third and final section opens with the chapter “Security practices of the Armed Forces in South America”, by Mariana da Gama Janot and Samuel Alves Soares. The authors offer alternative approaches to analyze the domestic use of force within contemporary democracies beyond their normative acceptance of refusal. The chapter challenges the notions of security through Marxist perspective and *International Political Sociology*’s professional practices discussion to scrutinize deep-seated and entrenched aspects of warfare and police activities. Working with the contemporary forms of domestic military engagement in Brazil and Colombia, the authors highlight how military practices have preserved and updated their counterinsurgent heritage within democracies, inviting the reader to challenge the pursuit of peace, justice, and strong institutions (SDG 16) beyond the scope of security itself.

The chapter “Gender and security: perspectives from South America”, by Cristian Daniel Valdivieso, Helena Salim de Castro, and Gabriela Aparecida de Oliveira, offers a literature review about the Latin American academic production on the links between international security and gender and feminist perspectives. The text is innovative since it maps South American literature on a theme that is mainly comprehended from a Global North perspective. Much of the mainstream global debate bases itself on a universal category of women, overlooking ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic differences. The chapter investigates if this trend is also present in literature from South America. The authors argue that there are efforts to reflect upon the local realities but decolonial, post-colonial, and peasant feminist perspectives are unusual in South American articles that link international security and gender. This text dialogues with SDG 5 (Gender Equality).

Lastly, the chapter by Alejo Vargas Velásquez and Farid Camilo Rondón Raigoza presents us with an analysis about the post-conflict scenario in Colombia, five years after the peace agreement between the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) – as it was written in 2021. Through the analyses of this important case, the chapter contributes greatly to a reflection upon the current challenges for building peaceful societies in Latin America. The authors focus on the role and missions that the Public Force, composed by the military forces and the police, performs in peacebuilding and highlight the advancements and insufficiencies of reforms in this sector. The text underlines the remaining challenges for building peace in the Colombian context and presents scenarios for thinking about future possibilities. This chapter contributes with important insights for reflecting about peacebuilding in other cases, including the difficulties and obstacles for such processes.

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1.

INEQUALITIES, CAPITALISM, POLITICAL REGIMES, AND THE SYSTEM OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS*

*João Paulo Avelãs Nunes***

*António Rafael Amaro****

Introduction

MUCH OF THE PRODUCTION IN THE HUMANITIES and the social sciences, and the technologies derived therefrom, as well as many of the political and ideological discourses, have at least since the second half of the 19th century, but more intensely in the 1920s-1930s and in the post-Cold War period, tended to consider that most human societies remain structurally and basically unequal and discriminatory. It is further argued that political regimes turn out to be conservative liberalism, demo-liberalisms and democracies held hostage by



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oligarchies or even dictatorships (counter-revolutionary, reactionary and/or revolutionary) and that the processes of subcontinental integration and multilateral organisations simply restore the legitimacy of unilateral powers and rivalries of great powers.

The reason why the presence, predominance and, sometimes, even the hegemony of such readings of reality are difficult to understand is two-fold: on the one hand, various experts in humanities and social sciences – philosophers and theologians, historians and economists, geographers and psychologists, sociologists and anthropologists, political scientists and international relations scholars, etc. – have offered different suggestions and alternatives for defining and analysing (and increasingly objectifying and elaborating) the development of the capitalist world-economy; on the other hand, welfare states, subcontinental integration processes and global international organisations have proved to be more effective and fair in reducing inequalities and forms of discrimination, and in enhancing democracy and development, promoting environmental sustainability and more efficient management of scarce and non-renewable natural resources (Heinich, 2021; Hobsbawm, 2005; Judt, 2018; Llosa, 2018).

This chapter aims to briefly describe and interpret the development of the correlation between humanities, social sciences and technologies derived therefrom and also the political-ideological discourses and the issue of inequalities at national, subcontinental and global scale. We then seek to characterise and analyse, from a present-day history standpoint, how since the end of the Cold War each nation state, each subcontinental integration strategy and the system of international relations are shaped and work towards reducing and/or expanding global social inequality phenomena (legal-political, socio-economic and socio-cultural).

We believe that the debate about the ethical, epistemological, theoretical and methodological fundamentals of social sciences and technologies derived therefrom is vital for increasing the degree to

which knowledge produced is objective and practical, and for determining how societies are willing to critically receive the aforementioned characterisation and suggestions for intervention. We shall start by considering the characteristics, constraints, potential, and limitations of epistemological paradigms available today as tools for shaping and legitimizing the praxis of social scientists and the surrounding communities (Hespanha, 1986; Jameson, 1991; Nunes, 1970; Nunes, 2021; Santos, 2003; Vattimo, 1987; Wood, 1996).

Epistemological paradigms

We agree with those who advocate that the organization of contemporaneity based on the Ancien Régime societies – primarily in territories that today encompass Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Austria – involved the gradual consolidation of the hegemony of the modern paradigm in terms of erudite culture. The founders of the modern paradigm inherited previous contributions (Greek-Latin, Muslim and Chinese cultural universes, *inter alia*) and went on to redefine how to understand knowledge and how it was socially implemented in the 17th and 18th centuries.

The modern paradigm assumes that sciences and technologies would generate absolutely objective and effective knowledge because it is ideologically neutral and corresponds to reality. Therefore, they were at the very top of the game among all types of knowledge, with exact sciences coming first, then the natural sciences and, lastly, the social sciences or humanities. If applied, through technology, to the management of natural phenomena and the governance of social relations, scientific knowledge would remove many of the problems affecting human communities.

Taking into account what the characteristics of the various objects of study – continuous, with regular changes, or with random changes –, exact sciences, natural sciences and social sciences or humanities, through different methodologies, would

draft general laws (based on mathematical models), specific laws, or rational explanations of reality. By mobilising knowledge, said produced technology would make it possible to act – by correcting or anticipating – according to natural or structural characteristics of reality.

Perhaps it is possible to group into two clusters the most important theoretical and practical after-effects of the growing presence of the modern paradigm fundamentals in the erudite cultural experiences of western and westernised societies from the mid-18th century onwards. The increase in confidence in how humans are able to effectively know and act on reality, and the importance given to ethical, epistemological and theoretical-methodological issues, has been overwhelming.

However, the claim for an alleged radical otherness and superiority of science and technology over other forms of knowledge, the deliberate mix-up between the epistemological characteristics of science and technology, and downplay of the negative implications of many of the proposed and adopted technological applications have also become clear. This in turn gave rise to the desire to legitimise the main world-views and ideological systems on the basis of rigour and reputation of science (scientism), as well as the inherent arrogant, intolerant, authoritarian or totalitarian tendency to label as inferior, incompetent or criminal all those who, either passively or actively, refused to accept the truth and the good (the eternal indisputability, inevitability, and advantages) supposedly proclaimed by sciences and technologies.

In the first half of the 20th century, western and westernised societies faced informal or explicit systemic dysfunction, and defiant predicaments regarding some of the main pillars of the modern paradigm. In this regard, we recall the First World War and the obstacles in the aftermath of the war (first of all, the Versailles Treaty and hyperinflation in Germany), the consolidation of totalitarian regimes, the various cases of mass violence, the 1929 Crisis, the Second World War and the Holocaust.

In reaction to those predicaments and, at the same time, limited by them, between the 1920s and the 1940s various scholars – most of whom connected to the humanities, social sciences and technologies derived therefrom – presented proposals and implemented practices that would result in the affirmation of the neo-modern paradigm from the early 1990s on. Some of these include, in particular, critical idealism and critical Marxism, the new historiography, structuralist anthropology, geography, sociology, and the Keynesian and structuralist schools of economic thought, the new cultural heritage, and the new museology.

According to the neo-modern paradigm, science produces temporary and partially valid knowledge of reality through an ongoing objectivation effort. There would be no substantial epistemological differences between the various sub-universes of science or hierarchical relations between types of knowledge. Some of the core precautions to be taken in methodology included monitoring and mobilizing world-views and ideologies that are inevitably part of the work of researchers, theoretical-methodological syncretism and transdisciplinarity, and the ongoing debate among peers and with the surrounding community.

Moreover, and according to the advocates of the neo-modern paradigm, whereas science has, in abstract terms, the sole purpose of producing and disseminating objective knowledge about reality, the characteristics and purpose of science-based technology are quite different. With the aim of designing general and specific ways of transforming reality, science-based technology and its application depends, first and foremost, on previous ideological choices (civic or organizational) about the meaning, intensity, costs, and benefits of the changes to be made.

The role of science, when it comes to science-based technology, would thus be complementary and instrumental, as knowledge about reality imposed neither the need nor the meaning and intensity of any change within it. It would allow science to better understand the reality in which action would be taken, foresee the degree of success that each of the various strategies of action would achieve, and any negative after-effects. This would also result in the merit of ethical regulation

of professional activities that produce science-based technology and/or that shape and operationalize technological applications.

The post-modern paradigm emerged in the 1960s and 1970s amid the Cold War, nuclear deterrence, relative stabilization and, at the same time, of more or less piecemeal protests against some of the strands of the Western Bloc and Soviet Bloc, the proliferation of situations of underdevelopment and dependence, despite the wave of independence processes in the aftermath of the Second World War. For the dominant elites and/or the bulk of social sectors, as well as for a substantial part of the protest groups – extreme left or extreme right –, to criticise global social reality implied a radical criticism of the underlying hegemony of the modern paradigm, whilst ignoring the reformist contributions of neo-modern paradigm.

In the light of the approaches taken by the founders of the post-modern paradigm, with the exception of some segments of natural and social reality that can be reconstructed and analysed in a neo-empirical way based on mathematical models (the structuring level of physics, chemistry, biology, geology, psychology, and economics as areas of scientific knowledge), humanity could only produce rational knowledge about reality under the influence of ideological systems. The choice would thus fall between more or less fair and sustainable proposals for the characterization/valuation and governance of reality, or perhaps between a fair/sustainable reading and unfair/unsustainable narratives.

Assuming that reality has, in essence, been unfair and self-destructive, those who defend the post-modern paradigm argue that knowledge should be critical and the basis for transformative action (traditionalist, conservative and/or modernizing). The key priority given either to criticizing the shortcomings of the past and present or to demonstrating the regenerative potential of the alternative proposed would imply disinvesting in any other ethical, epistemological, theoretical and methodological debates and, on the other hand, denying the detachment of humanities and arts, science and science-based technology from common sense and ideologies.

Both hypersubjectivity and neo-empiricism professed under the post-modern paradigm as the purported prevalence of intervention in reality compared to the knowledge of that same reality would legitimize the arbitrary overvaluation or disregard of certain aspects of reality. They would also legitimize ascribing, in advance, an evil intent to privileged social actors, unfoundedly stating the existence of similarities and solidarities among all social agents who are unjustly treated or discriminated against, the attachment of value-based meanings to existing theoretical categories, elevating adjectival metaphors to the status of concepts, and giving preference to argumentative logics of a moralizing and reductionist or even Manichean nature.

Due to the contradictory crossover between attempts to define the structure *a priori*, neo-empiricist limitations and social mobilization ambitions through promises of immediate and absolute renewal, many studies and dissemination/education initiatives influenced by the post-modern paradigm reflect the essence of the founding stages of the processes in question and underestimate their future development (i.e., the role of successive social actors and the piecemeal changes adopted). The disappointment resulting from such determinism – from the supposedly almost permanent and painful repetition of obstacles – would enable the widespread support to charismatic and magical leaderships and the adoption of allegedly revolutionary transformation projects.

Reality, social technologies resulting therefrom, and political-ideological discourses until 1991

Expansively from the 17th century on, and more explicitly so between the early 19th century and the end of the First World War (1914-1918), starting with the western and westernised societies, the changes undergone by human societies have resulted in an increase in the rate of wealth production, the expansion of

opportunities and of risks of upward or downward social mobility, and broader socio-economic and socio-cultural inequalities between individuals and regions or countries. The main driver resulted from the feudal mode of production (as configured in the Modern Age) (Kula, 1979; Beaud, 1992) losing influence and the slow advance/gradual densification of the capitalist mode of production.

Market economy or, incidentally, market production economy (present in previous stages and often including servile, slave and forced labour) came hand in hand with the promotion of individual effort and labour, the growth of urban and rural middle classes and the downgrading of manual skills, partly replaced by machines. Both migration and immigration to urban areas and the dramatic social consequences of the frequent economic crises intrinsic to competition capitalism increased the pressure for the proletarianization of greater or lesser parts of the workforce in the secondary, tertiary and primary sectors.

Even in countries that adopted Conservative Liberal Regimes (Berstein, 1992; Hespanha, 2003; Hespanha, 2004; Nunes, 2020; Rémond, 1999), the dismantling of the Ancien Régime went hand in hand with finding political and institutional solutions, legislation and administrative practices that put individuals on a par and freed them, but which at the same time deprived the vast majority of people of effective capacity for formal intervention to mitigate or eliminate inequalities and discrimination. Among others, the following phenomena are worthy of note: the increase in the number of non-autonomous territories (colonies and protectorates, with the imposition of segregated legal statuses for settlers or civilized, assimilated and indigenous people); differentiating between active and passive citizenship (discriminating people by sex, ethnicity, income, literacy, religion, and nationality); prohibiting employees from joining socio-labour associations and other forms of associativism for individuals from discriminated groups.

We would also like to point out the fostering of worldviews and science-based ideological currents, which, quoting empirical data corresponding to a decontextualized part of reality and with reference to the assumptions of the modern paradigm, as promoters of equality and, at the same time, intensifiers of the levels of inequality and discrimination, sought to suggest that the proposals for valuing and/or acting thereon were scientific, i.e., unquestionable, inevitable and beneficial. One only has to look at the examples of meritocratic individualism and the image of the self-made man, organicist approaches, social Darwinism, nationalist and imperialist unilateralism, and the alleged basic difference and superiority of erudite culture and civilisations over popular cultures (made up exclusively of material cultures and superstitions).

The various stages of global social transformation have in turn brought about an increase in efficiency and capacity for appropriating wealth/ domination of the old and new centres vis-à-vis the old and new semi-peripheries and peripheries (Wallerstein, 1974-1989). In this regard, we recall the Agricultural Revolution, the Commercial/Financial Revolution, the Liberal Revolution and/or the Modernisation of State Institutions, the Scientific/Technological Revolution, and the Industrial Revolution. It should be noted that the inequalities between regions or countries escalated at the same time as the changes in relative positions between them under the capitalist world-economy and the international relations system led by England/Great-Britain (Bulmer-Thomas, 1994; Fausto, 2005; Gordon, 2003; Lains, 2005) intensified.¹

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- 1 Given the independence of most of the non-autonomous territories of the American Continent and the "sprint to Asia and Africa", England/Great-Britain, France, Holland, and Belgium were able to consolidate their statuses as centres; the USA, Germany, and Japan progressed to the position as centres; the Chinese Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Russian Empire, the Ottoman Empire, Spain, and Portugal fell to the levels of peripheries or semi-peripheries more or less close to underdevelopment.

Although immersed in an environment of changes from Ancien Régime societies into contemporary societies and of consolidation of the hegemony of the capitalist world-economy and making efforts to recover and analyse the object of such contemporary study, many specialists in humanities, social sciences and/or technologies derived therefrom also took different positions on how this change should be valued and managed. We would point out that these areas of knowledge were, in the 18th and 19th centuries, times of ground-work – usually through autonomisation from philosophy and/or theology –, or at least of profound redefinition (in epistemological, theoretical and social sphere terms).

Taking into account their centrality and representativeness in the scientific-technological and ideological debate on the relationship between the capitalist mode of production in its first stage of development (capitalist competition) and the rise in inequalities, as historians we cannot overlook the contribution made by economists (or scholars of socio-economic phenomena). We consider that, despite the substantial differences in the political-ideological evaluation of the outcome of the capitalist mode of production, there was a broad consensus as to the characteristics of this very mode of production until the post-First World War period (Beaud, 1992; Galbraith, 1995; Nunes, 2008).

Adam Smith (1723–1790), David Ricardo (1772–1823) and many other classical liberal economists defended that the capitalist mode of production corresponded to the human nature and ensured more freedom to individuals and more production of wealth. They also argued that the structure of capitalism meant capitalist competition between small and medium-sized enterprises, legal equality for individuals, and freedom of economic initiative. Moreover, that individuals, companies and countries could compete in a market minimally regulated by the states. They also assumed that in non-autonomous territories there would remain an increased political and administrative intervention on the part of the “civilising

powers” by alleging a supposed racial inferiority of even the assimilated intermediate elites.

They also argued, *inter alia*, that the generalisation of the capitalist mode of production would have less positive secondary effects, the proletarianization and impoverishment of a substantial part of the population would result from the different capacities of individuals and the greater supply than demand for labour in the market, and that the widening development gap between countries originated from the different capacities of peoples and from the access to natural resources that would enable economic activity in the secondary and tertiary sectors (generating higher added value) or in the primary sector (generating less added value). Finally, that successive economic crises and consequent monopoly concentration resulted from free market.

Alexander Hamilton (1755-1804), Georg Friedrich List (1789-1846), Henry Clay (1777-1852) and many other nationalist economists shared the basics of classical liberalism ideology. They advocated a temporary and partially more protectionist and interventionist governance of capitalist economics because they came from countries that endured the most effective British, French, Dutch, and Belgium economies. Having witnessed the growing socio-labour and political-ideological conflicts in those regions that had experienced early industrialisation, if they lived in autocratic monarchies, they also advocated the guiding, repressive and preventive intervention of the state in the social sphere. Auguste Comte (1789-1857) and others who studied socio-economic phenomena that adopted a positivist outlook laid out the analyses and presented similar propositions.

Léon Walras (1834-1910), William Stanley Jevons (1835-1882), Carl Menger (1840-1921) and many other liberal marginalist (neo-classical) economists built arguments upon classical liberal ideals, but argued that competition capitalism would ultimately result in more production of wealth, less social inequality and increased economic and financial stability. All that was needed was for states

to interfere less and less in the economy and in socio-labour relations, and for individuals to act more and more like *Homo economicus* (as rational competitors). In their opinion, economic science should cease to be political economy and rely more and more on mathematics in order to ensure that scarce resources available are used as effectively as possible.

Robert Owen (1771-1858), Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865) and Karl Marx (1818-1883) foreshadow and symbolically represent the three main sub-universes of scholars studying the socio-economic phenomena behind the replacement of the capitalist mode of production by a Socialist (collectivist) mode of production: cooperativist, anarchist, and communist. They started out by adopting the capitalist mode of production definition put forward by classic liberal economists to advocate, in particular, the growing allegiance of victims of inequalities to the gradually more significant cooperativist alternative; the participation of such victims in revolutionary acts leading to the foundation of a new society (also cooperativist); the involvement of these proletarians in revolutionary actions which, under the leadership of avant-garde political parties and through dictatorship of the proletariat regimes, foretold the supposedly inevitable disaggregation of the capitalist mode of production and the establishment of the Socialist mode of production.

Between the end of the First World War and the mid-1930s, John Maynard Keynes (1883-1946), William Henry Beveridge (1879-1963) and other classical liberal economists created the Keynesian school of thought. Given the partial changes that had occurred in the most developed countries since the last quarter of the 19th century, the economic war and the war economy, and taking into account the aftermath of the Versailles Treaty (1919) and the Great Depression, this was a global proposal to reinterpret the capitalist mode of production, its relationship with inequalities and with the governance of the capitalist world-economy.

The capitalist mode of production would be, at the same time, more of a competition-type capitalism with small and medium-sized labour-intensive companies, and more of a monopoly capitalism, with large capital-intensive companies. The strengthening of the labour and living conditions of the workforce in the second sub-universe would bring with it better business results and greater macro-economic stability. In both cases, positive effects would proceed from a national and global multi-layered public regulation, adjustable to each environment – the welfare state –, enabling the promotion of individual initiative and autonomy, mitigating socio-cultural and/or socio-economic constraints, fostering economic growth and development, and substantially reducing the constancy and intensity of crises (socio-economic, ideological-political, diplomatic-military).

Despite some attempts to espouse this new way of understanding and acting on the capitalist world-economy² (Adler, 1995; Gordon, 1994; Leuchtenburg, 1963; Nunes, 2019), until the spill-over effect of the Second World War (1939-1945) classical liberalism/economic nationalism associated itself with demo-liberal regimes, state corporatism derived from fascist-type dictatorships (authoritarian and/or totalitarian), and orthodox Marxism – or Stalinism – arising out of the Soviet experience remained predominant worldwide. But once again the widespread brutality of the military conflict and the challenges of the economic war/war economy set the stage for the introduction and consolidation of new analysis opportunities and solutions.

Following the approval of the Beveridge Report in the United Kingdom (1942/1943) directly influencing Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, the U.S. Administration and Congress undertook a

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2 On these experiences, partial and/or temporary in larger countries (the U.S. New Deal, the German Weimar Constitution, the French Popular Front), more global in smaller countries (Switzerland, Sweden, Denmark), organisational such as those led by the American industrialist Henry Ford (1863-1947) and the Confindustria business association of Northern Italy (1910- current).

number of initiatives that eventually led to Keynesianism and the welfare state as the hegemonic economic and social current of thought and governance model in most developed and intermediate capitalist countries during the Cold War period (1947-1991).³ The following are also worthy of note: the 26th International Labour Conference (Philadelphia) and the Bretton Woods Conference (both in 1944), the San Francisco Conference, and the creation of the United Nations Organisation that stemmed from the League of Nations (1945), the Marshall Plan/the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation (1948-1951), the U.S.-Japan Mutual Security Treaty (1951), the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (1947), and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (1960).

One of the core pillars of welfare states, funded by public investment and supported by the private sector and civil society, is that of social policies, in particular income/price policies and full employment in the context of tripartite social consultation, social security and the health system. We also recall the infrastructure pillars (first and foremost, research/dissemination and education/training, energy, transport, communications, housing, culture, and sports), the direct intervention in the economy (especially the establishment of public or mixed companies, the granting of support and advice to private companies and business associations), and foreign policy (promoting negotiated globalisation in multilateral international organisations and in subcontinental integration processes, and fostering the development of peripheral countries) (Aracil et al., 1998; Chagnollaud, 1999; Cunha, 2008; Gaddis, 2007; Judt, 2007; Nunes, 1997; Nunes, 2013b; Valério, 1995).

Raúl Prebisch (1901-1986), Celso Furtado (1920-2004), Gunnar Myrdal (1898-1987) and other Keynes-based classical liberal economists, concerned with the difficulty in ensuring, within the

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3 On the Portuguese situation between 1926 and 1974, see Amaro (2018).

capitalist world-economy, the development of underdeveloped societies, founded the structuralist economic theory in the 1950s. The barrier to this intent was found in both autonomous states at least since the early 19th century, and in countries that had gained independence after the end of the Second World War. During the Cold War period, despite the institutionalisation of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (1948) and the emergence of the Non-Aligned Movement (1955), structuralist-based economic and social policies were hardly applied.

The degree to which strategies for transforming underdeveloped states into intermediate development states or developed states helped explain the scant take-up of structuralist intervention proposals, as much as or more than the confrontational stance taken by the two political-military blocs of the Cold War or the structural constraints that contributed to the reproduction of inequalities between countries. An example of this problem in the capitalist world-economy where the Keynesian economic theory prevailed is, in the one hand, the opposition against and lack of support for Celso Furtado as Brazil's Minister of Planning (during the João Goulart administration between September 28, 1962 and the coup d'état of March 31, 1964) (Corsi, 2001; Furtado, 1971; Cardoso, 2015; Fernandes, 2017), and, on the other hand, the late development in South Korea and Taiwan (which only started in the 1970s).

Post-Cold War nation states, subcontinental integration processes, international organisations, and inequalities

Because of the collapse of the Soviet Bloc and the Soviet Union between 1989 and 1991, the year 1991 came to be referred to as the closure of the Cold War. The bipolar international relations system (simultaneously multilateral and unilateral) seemed to be replaced by a unipolar and multilateral system led by the U.S. Multilateral

subcontinental integration processes proliferated as the result of the relative success of the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation (1948), the European Economic Community (1957), the European Free Trade Association (1960) and the European Union (1993). The remaining left and right wing dictatorships supported by the victorious democratic regimes gave way to new democracies and the capitalist world-economy tended to absorb the entire world economy.

In a world reshaped from a unipolar international relations system, yet based on international organisations, multilateral subcontinental integration processes, democratic nation states and more and more developed capitalist economies, inequality levels and the amount/intensity of forms of discrimination decreased drastically. Yet, it has become clear that advancement today is rather different. At least since 2008, citizens with political intervention and journalists, researchers in humanities and social sciences define current times as one of strengthening of dictatorships and increasing human rights violations; times of crisis of democracy and multilateralism; of socio-economic crisis and correlation between new technologies and employability; of environmental crisis and crisis in non-renewable natural resources (Albright, 2018; Fukuyama, 1999; Gorbachov, 2021; Pinto, 2021; Sen, 2007; Stiglitz, 2012; Zakaria, 2021).

We thus argue that more efforts must be made in rebuilding and analysing this huge deviation, whether in relation to prospects in the foreseeable future, in particular ideological, or in relation to speculated scenarios through objective science, given the progress of developed and intermediate developed capitalist countries in the North-American Bloc from the 1940s to the 1980s (the situation in underdeveloped capitalist states was utterly different). We believe that we should look first and foremost at the modes of governance of the international relations system, the economic and social policies adopted, and what has been written about them in terms of ideology, science and technology.

Let us start by pointing out the fact that almost all of the existing organisations after 1991 were formed or reformed during the Cold War. Moreover, that in most developed countries and those of intermediate development, before and after 1991, have open democratic or demo-liberal regimes, i.e., they offer ample possibilities for debate and for formal political and trade union participation. Finally, we point out that before and after 1991, most of the political systems in question have been led by the same centre-left, centre-right and right-wing parties. Apparently, there were no structural changes in how these civil societies, state institutions and political systems valued the situation and acted thereon.

After the end of the Cold War, the U.S. and the intermediate powers of the North-American Bloc chose not to support the implementation and consolidation of democratic regimes and of developed or intermediate capitalist economies in most former Soviet Union states, in the People's Republic of China, in Yugoslavia, etc. They thus repeated, to some extent, the unilateralism and unreasonable egocentrism that prevailed after the First World War – the repercussions of which we are very familiar with –, but counteracted the multilateralism and rational egocentrism which, in part, marked the post-Second World War period. Many of these and other countries have, therefore, formally or informally, continued or went back to having dictatorial regimes – authoritarian and/or totalitarian – and to committing human rights violations or even forms of mass violence.

Once the reconstitution of irreconcilable geographic rifts between the U.S., on the one hand, and the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China, on the other – a phenomenon magnified by constant nuclear deterrence –, the UN Security Council basically came to a gridlock. Due both to this take-up of a rationale similar to that of the Cold War and to the all too often unilateral stances by the U.S. and the intermediate powers of the former North-American Bloc (Japan, FRG/Germany, the United

Kingdom, France, Canada, Australia, etc.), the UN as a whole has also played a rarely proactive role as a multilateral international organisation of global scale and of an all-encompassing scope.

Perhaps even more difficult to understand, as a result of the developments encompassing the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation, the European Economic Community, and the European Free Trade Association, the European Union itself – inheritor of the responsibility for the outbreak of the two world wars in the 20th century – has so far been unable to secure a level of internal cohesion that enables it to play a different role on the world stage. It also refused to accept the integration of Turkey, suffered the exit of the United Kingdom⁴ and the implementation of authoritarian governments in Member States, and lives under the likely threat of extreme right-wing parties winning elections in other Member States. Meanwhile, none of the subcontinental integration processes undertaken in other parts of the world since 1945 have achieved a level of detail remotely similar to that of the European Union.

Political and social policies of developed and intermediate capitalist countries represent yet another decisive transformation. From the general approaches and measures first adopted in Chile under military dictatorship (from 1973), in the United Kingdom led by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (from 1979) and in Ronald Reagan's Administration in the U.S. (from 1981), since the post-Cold War period the hegemony of Keynesianism and negotiated



4 We would point out that England/Great-Britain (the United Kingdom of Great-Britain and Northern Ireland since 1922) was the world's greatest power at least in the 18th and 19th centuries and chose to establish a strategic partnership with France – until then its main rival – soon after the formation of the German Empire (1871). We also recall that the United Kingdom decisively influenced the development of the European Economic Community and of the European Union at least since 1973, and that in 2016, when the United Kingdom voted in favour of Brexit, the country was the second most powerful in the European Union (after Germany).

globalisation (based on welfare states and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) has been replaced by the predominance of monetarism and neoliberal globalisation (based on the autonomy of central banks/multinationals and on the World Trade Organisation).

Friedrich Hayek (1899-1992), George Stigler (1911-1991), Milton Friedman (1992-2006) and many other neoclassical liberal economists proposed monetarism as an updated version of marginalism. They had every confidence on the effectiveness of private initiative and on the ability of markets to self-regulate based on competition. They ascribed the origin of most of the difficulties felt in capitalist countries in the 1970s and 1980, including stagflation and the reduction in the rate of economic growth, and the threat to individual freedom to the intervention of governments in the economic and social spheres. However, they felt that the stability of national currencies should be ensured by public entities (central banks, provided that their statutes guaranteed their autonomy from political systems).⁵

However, the change in question depended on individuals, organisations and institutions created or led by developed and intermediate capitalist countries adhering to the monetarist economic theory and economic-social policies. These include, *inter alia*, researchers and university teachers, journalists and columnists, leaders and members of centre-left, centre-right and right-wing political parties and trade unions, as well as voters in general, leaders of employers' organisations, entrepreneurs and company directors, entities such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and

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5 For a more heterodox neoclassical perspective on the development of capitalism, see, *inter alia*, Amaro (2021).

Development, and the European Economic Community/European Union.⁶

On the implications of replacing the Bretton Woods Agreement by the Washington Agreement, we will first mention those that we see in a positive light: the quick widespread of new technologies and more effective organisational methods since the Cold War period; the expansion and intensification of the pace of economic growth and, in some cases, of the level of development in many underdeveloped countries, enabling hundreds of thousands of people to move up from poverty to the lower middle class or middle class; and the use of markets as an informal way of driving the efforts to integrate former underdeveloped communist countries into the capitalist world-economy.

Finally, we list the consequences that we view in a negative light, such as the replacement of Keynesianism and negotiated globalisation by monetarism and neoliberal globalisation. We also highlight, in developed and intermediate countries, the relocation of a substantial part of the economic activity and the piecemeal dismantling of welfare states, the worsening of socio-economic inequalities and of the degree of social and labour insecurity, the deterioration of essential public infrastructures, the increase in the power of large monopolistic or oligopolistic multinationals, the escalation of ideological and political radicalisation, the weakening of international organisations/multilateral subcontinental integration processes, and the strategy to manage flows of refugees and immigrants, which is basically security-based and often violates human rights.⁷

On a global scale, we recall the strong contribution to strengthening the capacity for internal control and external influence of dictatorships (formal and informal, authoritarian and/or totalitarian),

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6 See, in particular, Amaro (2010), Bento (2004), Habermas (2015), Pinilla García (2020), and Silva (2010).

7 See, *inter alia*, Chomsky (2021).

in particular the regimes in force in the People's Republic of China, the Russian Federation, North Korea, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Iran; the widening of inequalities between emerging countries, underdeveloped societies, and failed states. We also add the build-up of problems that resulted in the outbreak of the 2008 crisis, which was the greatest global social and economic breakdown since 1929; the accelerated deterioration of many democratic regimes, first in the U.S., the Republic of India and in Brazil; the dissemination of negationist approaches and attitudes, as well as the delaying of serious efforts to overcome the threat of destruction of the planet's environmental balance.

In view of these significant changes, what is the position of researchers in humanities, social sciences and technologies derived therefrom, the media, civil society organisations and national and international institutions? We have identified four major groups of perspectives and narratives, which reproduce the rationale and relative positions similar to those taken, the repercussions of which we are very familiar with, in the period between the end of the First World War and the beginning of the Second World War: a) the advocacy – explicit and/or implicit, holistic or mitigated – of the assumptions of monetarism and neoliberal globalisation (mainstream); b) the depiction of capitalism as a form of global social organisation that intrinsically generates inequalities and discrimination (minority); c) radical critique of democracy, multilateralism, globalisation and multiculturalism, allegedly imposed by degenerate elites, which would be at the root of all the difficulties felt by every national community in the aftermath of the Cold War (emerging); d) the defence of the virtues of democracy and multilateralism, of Keynesianism, structuralism, and negotiated globalisation as the most effective, fair, and sustainable forms of governance to date in the capitalist world-economy (minority or emerging).

In short, it could be said that the discourse strategy of those who defend neoclassical liberal theories introduces monetarism as

the only scientific way of organising knowledge on economic activities, and portrays Keynesianism as an ideology, i.e., as a moderate version of collectivist social and economic policies, leaving out the context and initiative to adopt it. The 2008 crisis would have been the result of illegal conduct by bank directors and negligent attitudes of central banks' governors, and the many situations of hyper-monopolist concentration and intense ideological-political radicalisation would be temporary and unrelated to economic development.

On the other hand, those who advocate a moral perspective of socio-economic relations attach less relevance to the detailed study of both the evolution of effective collectivist socio-economic experiences and the alleged differences between the various ways of managing capitalism, which would intrinsically generate insuperable injustices (inequalities and discriminations) between people and countries. Moreover, the inherent capitalist logic of competition and profit would also lead to the increasing deterioration of environmental balances and the depletion of scarce and non-renewable natural resources (Atkinson, 2015; Milanovic, 2016, 2022; Piketty, 2014, 2020; Smith, 2021).

As natural intellectuals and leaders of former centre-right or right-wing parties, and as supporters and leaders of extreme right political forces from the outset, the proponents of a nationalist approach to the governance of capitalism tend to describe an indefinite, supposedly glorious past based on protectionism and/or corporatism, unilateralism, on authoritarian or restrictive demo-liberal regimes, and on the predominance of a certain ethnic-religious identity. Current dysfunctions are thus supposedly the result of the elites and minorities seizing democracy, of the implications of the implementation of false globalist and multilateral utopias – which have opened the door to unfair and aggressive competition from other countries –, and the invasion by migrants, refugees, and immigrants. They therefore ignore the problem of ageing and population

decrease (of the active population and even of the total population) in developed and intermediate countries.

Having lost ground in the fields of research/dissemination, education/training, and in the media, and deprived of stable connections with centre-left, centre-right, and right-wing political forces, the supporters of classical liberal Keynesian and structuralist theories have, at least since 2008, been taking up positions in these same fields. They state the need to compare the current situation with previous periods and not to omit the immediate background of current-day phenomena. They defend the virtues of democracy and multilateralism, of negotiated and regulated governance of capitalism – at regional, national, subcontinental, and global scales – as a possible means to introduce modernisation, produce wealth, reduce inequalities and discriminations, and mitigate environmental risks and the depletion of essential natural resources.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have sought to briefly analyse – reconstruct, contextualise and compare, based on certain ethical, epistemological and theoretical assumptions – the fact that much of the current production in humanities, social sciences, and technologies derived therefrom, as well as a significant part of the political discourse produced today defines capitalism as being essential or exclusively tantamount to inequality and discrimination. These readings also undermine the importance of a thorough understanding of the historical dimension of capitalism, in particular its different stages and modes of governance, and of the various ways in which collectivist ideals can be put into practice. We believe that we will only be able to embrace the complexity of reality through comprehensive epistemological, theoretical, and methodological analyses, to address simplistic and appreciative viewpoints and to outline effective and consensual solutions.

We also support the importance of distinguishing common sense/ideology and science and technology as core concepts (ideal, as per Max Weber) in the drive to build objective knowledge about reality and to structure effective and/or fair interventions in the present reality. To this end, it is necessary to adopt the most effective precautions in each particular case and to not abandon – which, moreover, would be impossible – the ideological mixes created or recreated by each person. Some of these methodological solutions could include openness to debate with the other and the pursuit of transdisciplinarity/theoretical syncretism.

We have proposed that Keynesianism and structuralism were and are scientific forms (i.e., objective) of knowing the capitalist world-economy as starting points for providing effective and fairer technological solutions for managing the capitalist mode of production. This review arises from observing what occurred in other stages of contemporary history (first and foremost, in the 1920s and 1930s and during the Cold War) and from comparing the alternatives offered by monetarism, economic nationalism (protectionist/corporatist) and collectivism.

We conclude by quoting Hannah Arendt, where she states that

[...] if it is the function of the public realm to throw light on the affairs of men by providing a space of appearances in which they can show in deed and word, for better or worse, who they are and what they can do, then darkness has come when this light is extinguished by “credibility gaps” and “invisible government”, by speech that does not disclose what it is, but sweeps under the carpet, by exhortations, moral and otherwise, that under the pretext of upholding old truths, degrade all truth in meaningless triviality. (Arendt, 2021, p.10)

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2.

AUTOMATING PERCEPTION: THREATS, COMMUNICATION, AND SECURITIZATION



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Introduction

SECURITY DYNAMICS ARE INHERENTLY EMBEDDED in communication processes, i.e., the production, emission, reception, decoding, and interpretation of different kinds of signals. In this sense, Paul Virilio (2005, p.24) sustained that “there is no war [...] without representation, nor a sophisticated weapon without psychological mystification, because, in addition to instruments of destruction, weapons are instruments of perception, i.e.,



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stimulus that provoke phenomena". It is illustrative that the security dilemma, one of the most traditional issues in international security, is grounded on how actor A interprets actor B producing and acquiring military equipment or ingressing military alliances. It can be deemed a power-seeking behavior aimed at changing the balance of power among states, which could lead actor A to foreshadow hazards to its existence or regard it as a defensive endeavor. Booth and Wheeler (2008) named the tension in decoding the other's intention dilemma of interpretation. Other scholars had already explored how threats are correctly or incorrectly perceived by international actors, seeking to minimize possible distortions throughout the process of emission, transmission, and reception of these signals (Jervis, 1988).

Constructivist approaches, in turn, contend that understanding this dynamic is not a matter of assessing the correspondence between meaning and signifier, aiming to distinguish real and false threats, but of analyzing how the processes of socialization and identity construction shape what is seen as threatening, and frame certain groups as potential enemies (Adler and Barnett, 1988; Weldes, 1996).

These authors suggest that the dynamics of communication and perception shape how actors train, maintain and employ their instruments of force. Works on securitization, one of the most prominent theoretical perspectives in international security, sought to detail the mechanisms by which something becomes a security problem, regardless of its objective existence, resulting in the legitimation of exceptional decisions (Buzan, Wæver, and Wilde, 1998). Since its initial formulation, the securitization theory has been refined by quests on the characteristics and effects of the speech act, the importance of contextual elements, as well as the relationship between the speaker and the audience (Balzacq, Leonard, and Ruzicka, 2016; Coté, 2016; Stritzel, 2007).

Here we aim to reflect on how this communicational process is affected by another factor: the adoption of artificial intelligence

(AI) in surveillance and weapon systems, as means to automatize the identification of threats and, ultimately, the decision on whether and how to respond to them. We provide, with no intention to be exhaustive, an account of the effects of this technology in the automation, modulation, and substitution of human perception in decisions about the use of force. The chapter is structured as follows. First, we define the threat as a process of emission, reception, and interpretation of a signal and point out how artificial intelligence subverts this dynamic. Second, we explore the impact of this process on the legitimization of security policies and the use of force. Finally, we consider the relationship between the adoption of this technology and the blurring between defense and public security.

Threat and perception automating

We account threat as a process, not as an object, precisely because it lacks existence. It is constituted only in and for an interpretive perception. It is not, therefore, an objective fact that can be identified, determined, and located in space and time, but a complex relationship between a source that emits a signal, the signal itself, and its reception. It should be noted that the subjectivity of the interpretation is present in all the elements composing the process of threat construction. We will further return to this aspect because it is precisely in this subjectivity, immanent to the interpretation, that the human is replaced by the vision machine (Virilio, 1994), to reduce the time between the signal's emission and perception, facilitating a prompt response.

The Latin term for threat, *minacia*, has different meanings, such as: a) an intimidating word or gesture; b) the promise of punishment or harm; c) harbinger of unpleasant events. In these terms, the threat is deemed as a representation, gesture, or manifestation, for the one who perceives it, announces an undesirable situation, harm,

or imminent danger to their existence (Saint-Pierre, 2017). The relational process that results in the subjective construction of the threat can be analytically decomposed into six components. The first is the threatening element, that is, the source emitting the intimidating signal, and causing concern. The second is the sign itself, which we name the referent. It can be expressed in speech, behavior, or the material manifestation of danger, such as troops' movement, the clouds of a storm, or the colors of a poisonous animal. The third component is what the signal communicates, its content, which we call the referred. It can be understood as the outcome of the signal decodification, the perceived disaster, materially, the attack or storm. There is, then, the threat's object, that is, the threatened, the target of the communicated danger. Finally, there is the transmitter, which operates between the receiver and the emission. This position is mostly occupied by the media that not only replicate the signals but also decode them and communicate their perception to the audience, which, in turn, receives and interprets what has been reported.

Here, our concern is the interference of artificial intelligence mechanisms, carried by systems of weapons or surveillance, in all phases of the process of threat construction. It transforms profoundly both the dynamics of perception and its results, affecting: *time*, due to the speed at which data can be identified and processed; *space*, since the global reach of these artifacts, in geographical terms; the communicational *content*, which is equated by algorithms and stored as metadata outside the process; the *synthesis* or *prognosis*, which determines whether and to what extent the signals received constitute a threat; the *response*, by proposing alternatives of action in the face of the decoded stimulus, based on the evaluation of the probabilities of success, being success defined by the relative efficiency determined by artificial intelligence (AI).

Since the publication of Galileo's results on the use of the telescope, the sense of obviousness about what is seen with the naked eye has been definitively contested. The telescopic instrument

disconcerted the evidence of observation, like the child to the king, who was naked. The vision machine was introduced into scientific observation in an undisputed way, both telescopically and microscopically, revealing unbelievable new worlds. The naivety of observation was subverted by the machine that proved to be more reliable than the eye itself, collaborating with it, at first, then relativizing it and, finally, replacing it.

The process of threat perception, undertaken by AI, in which the transmission, data analysis, and decision-making are carried out at a speed unattainable for humans, is especially dramatic when applied to security and defense technologies. A set of highly accurate artifacts of recognition and identification, programmed with certain criteria, to locate possible targets and report back to the base, are already available and in use. These artifacts can fly at high altitudes with autonomy in search of objects or subjects previously defined in their programming, and many of these artifacts can carry weaponry to attack their targets. Currently, the decision to shoot down the identified target is made by a human command. However, the artifact can be programmed to make this decision autonomously once the target is located and the unwanted side effects are considered. This kind of equipment is commonly called Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS).

In this case, equipped with AI, these artifacts assume not only the role of identifying the threat but also of deciding on the use of force and on the way to employ it. They are also able to learn, and, if programmed in this way, to autonomously add new criteria to identify the target and decide on the kill shot. In this case, they would no longer depend on a human operator to identify targets, not even to set the criteria of identification. At that moment, the machine would have hijacked the very essence of politics, the possibility of distinguishing friends from enemies (Schmitt, 1984).

As mentioned before, all the constitutive elements of the process of threat construction are embedded in subjectivity. However,

the signals, indicating possible existential threats, are getting increasingly rapid (either because of the greater range of vectors of danger or because of their speed, which can be hypersonic). Consequently, vision machines (drones, radars, satellites) with more powerful abilities to perceive and analyze these signals become urgent. The urgency to decode and synthesize those signals does not leave room for the doubts inherent to human subjectivity. Consequently, the work of analyzing the signals, interpreting them, and synthesizing an observation, a judgment, is given over to the authority of the machine.

It would also be the machine to suggest a certain response to the threat it perceived, or to autonomously decide which is the efficient and effective course of action to quell the threat's harmful effects. It should be noted that, in the second case, the prerogative of deciding when an event is threatening and if it constitutes an exceptional situation would be left to the machine's will. Therefore, the decision to exceptionally suspend constitutional rights, for instance, to confront an existential threat, could be grounded on the machine's decoding and synthesis of the signals it perceives. It would assume the position to decide on the exceptionality.

Although we are considering a threat promoted by an external actor and, therefore, pertaining to the scope defense, the same argument and process can be transferred *ceteris paribus* to the sphere of internal security, under surveillance capitalism (Zuboff, 2020). When assessing the imminence, a crime, the vision machine, which not only recognizes and files physiognomies but also typifies behaviors – as calm, agitated, doubtful – and even foresees possible movements of certain subjects according to the criteria defined by the programmer. It could also detect possible social movements deemed as destabilizers of law and order, as is the case in systems developed by Israel, and used by the police in Brazil (Henrique, 2021).

The machine could warn about a suspicious situation or the imminence of an attack on law and order, diagnosing an unusual

situation that would require an extraordinary response. Moreover, due to the fastness in processing information and the need for an urgent reaction, the system could automatically trigger the response, whose legitimacy would be grounded on efficiency. Under this logic, the automated system could hijack not only politics, as a specific and defining scope of the social, but also the need for an audience to legitimize the act of exceptionality in the securitization process.

Perception automation and the legitimization of the use of force

Similarly to Ulrich Beck's (2008) definition of risk, threat is essentially different from the catastrophe it announces, not having an existence external to its social interaction. The danger inferred from this announcement does not depend on the perception of its existence. The threat, on the other hand, depends on the conviction in its existence. If the threat is built upon the relationship between a signal and its perception, the latter can be stimulated or shaped in a way that the non-existent fact is replaced by an image forged by this modulation of perception. The fact that this externally shaped image can be the representation of a non-existent reality, which only exists in and for the perception, leads us to question, as Beck did, how a non-existent situation can be assumed as real, disseminated as a concrete threat that grounds and legitimates the use of lethal force.

The credibility of a threat interpretation depends on several factors and grounds the consequent security policies. In this sense, communicational moves seek to shape the general perception into accepting particular security policies as reasonable, necessary, desirable, or even inevitable. Different audiences can be identified, such as those actors with decision powers – parliamentarians, ministers, military, and presidents – and the general public that, despite not occupying institutional spaces of power, must be convinced of the reality of the threat and the adequacy of the response, at least

in democracies. Many works analyzed how the written and television media importantly affect the decoding and production of threat signals. Here, we reflect on the effects of automating perception through systems of surveillance and autonomous weapons guided by artificial intelligence.

Among the mechanisms underpinning the credibility of a particular perception of threat, we can highlight the legitimacy of who communicates it. Under this token, the speaker draws upon the institutional or social space power s/he occupies. It is known in rhetoric as *ethos*. When a doctor or health institution reports a public health problem, for instance, this statement is assumed to be reliable and relevant, given the expectation about the orator's technical competence. Likewise, the argument of religious leaders tends to be accepted due to the moral authority assigned to these figures in different societies. The main argument of defenders of autonomous surveillance and weapons systems is the assumption that these instruments are more objective, efficient, faster, and are not affected by deficiencies, subjectivity, and doubts inherent to human operators. In this sense, what they communicate is put in a position of scientific or technical authority, facilitating the acquiescence and making it difficult to contest the outcome: the verdict of the autonomous system becomes unquestionable. In the surveillance capitalism, the machine has seized the infallibility, once an exclusive prerogative of the Supreme Pontiff.

More broadly, the set of ideas and beliefs intersubjectively shared by a certain collectivity can restrict or favor the credibility of certain discourses and, therefore, the conviction in the existence of a certain threat. In this sense, Beetham (1991), for instance, argues that the legitimacy of political power depends on its ability to justify itself according to previously existing beliefs. This set of beliefs has been named and theorized in several other ways, such as commonplaces (Jackson, 2006), cultural resources (Rae, 2003; Swidler, 1986; Welles, 1996), or cultural beliefs (Johnson, Dowd, and Ridgeway, 2006).

Beyond the different forms of theorizing these elements, it is widely acknowledged that the social beliefs prior to the communication of the threat are essential to how it will be expressed and interpreted.

These intersubjectively shared ideas and prejudices about what kind of behavior, clothing, or physical constitution represents a threat are incorporated and perpetuated by the algorithms, dictating the surveillance and autonomous weapons systems functioning. The main difference is that, when working into these systems, they are concealed by the belief in technology neutrality. Furthermore, since the set of information captured by these vision machines is reversed in autonomous learning, the ability to control the automated process of perception and decision is reduced, as well as the period of examination on both the imminence of danger and the response. The efficiency, objectivity, and speed of response attributed to technological performance paralyze the political reflection on the justice and legitimacy of the course of action undertaken.

Two other important factors can be highlighted to understand the process by which the image of a non-existent future is assumed to be real: the argument's persuasion in terms of the internal structure and the interests and internal dynamics of the institutions responsible for decoding the threatening signal. As for the former, the speaker can communicate his interpretation through metaphors, statistical data, or can draw upon emotions, such as fear and hope. Through these rhetorical mechanisms, the one communicating the threat can access a set of ideas and beliefs previously accepted by the audience, increasing the chances of acceptance.

In this context, the interpretation made by instruments of surveillance guided by artificial intelligence and autonomous weapons systems tends to be seen as more reliable, due to the socially shared notion that the machine has a greater qualitative and quantitative capacity of processing information when compared to humans. Even in situations where the machine reports its interpretation to a human operator, who must decide whether to engage or not, the

human decision-maker is inclined to assume the machine's perception as the most appropriate. Furthermore, the operator is conditioned by the possibility of suffering sanctions if he incurs an error when not following what had been advised by artificial intelligence, while an error induced by the machine's interpretation tends to be viewed with greater complacency.

It should not be overlooked that national institutions responsible for assessing security risks and potential threats have interests of their own, which include budget allocation, political pressure, or entrenched understandings, which may lead their members to give greater importance to certain threats to the detriment of others. The adoption of high-tech systems of active surveillance and autonomous weapons, assumed to increase the efficiency of security institutions, for instance, may justify a budget increment.

Moreover, institutional cultures and confirmation bias must be considered. The first consists of patterns of behavior and understandings rooted in security institutions, while the second is a psychological mechanism by which individuals tend to interpret and seek evidence of what they assume *a priori* to be true, neglecting evidence that contradicts them. Since the algorithms, dictating the machine's perception, are based on certain conceptions and prejudices – held by security institutions – about what is threatening, their interpretative results are easily accepted by the actors responsible for the security sector and, on the other hand, they serve to reinforce the beliefs shared by these groups.

Finally, enthusiasts of the surveillance and autonomous weapons systems sustain that the progressive automation of threat perception and tactical decisions would allow for greater compliance of combat practices to *jus in bello*, guaranteeing the humanization of conflict and reducing war crimes (Umbrello, Torres, and Bellis, 2020). For Arkin (2010), for instance, contend that even with imperfections, autonomous weapons systems could act more ethically on the battlefield than those operated by humans, reducing the

number of civilian deaths and property damage, since the decision to engage would be based on strictly objective criteria. The narrative that the ethical limits drawn for military action would not be violated because they do not depend on a human operator constitutes a powerful rhetorical instrument in the legitimization of the use of violence. In this sense, lethal violence is presented as milder and more rational, which may make the use of force less costly, in terms of justification.

In addition to ethical imperatives, the greater precision in the distinction between combatants and non-combatants can be presented as a gain in terms of more efficient use of the available military resources, reducing not only avoidable human losses but also unnecessary use of war material. In this way, the decision on the use of violence, taken autonomously by the weapon, is framed as reasonable and pragmatic.

The imaginary of technical effectiveness, grounded on the human absence, not only favors the acceptance of the use of violence, when undertaken through these specific means but also draws the line or helps to reinforce the division between those actors considered to be reliable in terms of the use of violence and those whose resort to force is immediately condemned as despicable or irrational. The endeavor to present the adversary's violence as unacceptable, irrational, and, therefore, illegitimate, is an integral part of any armed conflict. This can be done through different parameters of legitimacy, such as compliance with the law, the righteousness of the pursued political goal, or the methods of force employment.

Many non-state armed groups establish their own codes and rules of engagement to avoid the excessive use of force, which can impact their legitimacy for both local and international audiences (Schlichte and Schneckener, 2015). From the point of view of the legitimacy of violence, the dissemination of lethal autonomous weapons systems, deemed more ethically adequate and technically efficient, can deepen the division between great powers that possess

high-cost military technologies and insurgent groups that do not have this kind of resources. The idea that the violence of the former is reasonable is reinforced, while the action of the contesting groups is relegated to a supposed irrationality. Thus, the spaces of legitimate resistance are shortened (Beier, 2017). A similar concern can be raised about North-South global relations. When a particular type of lethality artifact is elected as less reprehensible, framed as more ethically compromised, a hierarchy is established between the instruments of violence. Consequently, the unequal distribution of these military technologies also draws a line between central states, considered reliable in terms of the use of force internationally, and peripheral states, viewed with skepticism.

From armed conflicts to public security

In recent decades, literature on international security and public security have been concerned with the blurring of the division between the instruments of war and law enforcement (Bigo, 2001, 2016; Edmunds, 2006; Eriksson and Rhinard, 2009; Lutterbeck, 2005; Saint-Pierre, 2011; Weiss, 2011). This phenomenon is seen in both the increasing domestic employment of the Armed Forces in urban policing operations, combating terrorism and organized crime, as well as border control (Clarke, 2013; Head and Scott, 2009; Schnabel and Hristov, 2010), and police progressively adopting militarized training and tools (Campbell and Campbell, 2016; Kraska, 2007).

While the academic debate on LAWS is focused on its use in international armed conflicts, as well as its regularization or prohibition by international law, little has been produced about the potential incorporation of this kind of instrument into public security. According to Heyns (2016), since remotely controlled systems – which depend on a human operator – are already widely available

to police forces, increasing pressure can be expected for the incorporation of autonomous systems in law enforcement activities, even if these would be possibly equipped with less-lethal weaponry such as pepper spray and Taser stun guns. In this sense, the author does not use the term Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems when referring to autonomous public security systems.

This conception, however, assumes that police forces are always less lethal and guided by minimal use of force, which is not the case in most countries where police lethality is alarming. This brings us, once again, to the debate on whether autonomous decisions of surveillance and weapons systems are potentially more ethical and subject to legal boundaries. In countries such as Brazil, for instance, the lethal use of force by the police against its society, whether criminals, groups seen as threatening, or simply accidental victims, framed as collateral damage, is widely accepted. In previous work, we showed that in the Brazilian parliamentary debates on the military deployment against organized crime in urban spaces, favorable accounts prevailed, and the major part of the contestation arguments hinged around the inability to distinguish the general population from criminals, similarly to the quest on the distinction between combatant and non-combatant (Succi Junior, 2021). The idea that vision machines can interpret with greater precision and very quickly a given situation, disentangling the target to be engaged from the residents, has rhetorical power to sustain the deployment of lethal force, typical of interstate conflicts, in widely populated territories.

Final considerations

The growing participation of vision machines and the use of artificial intelligence in surveillance and weapons systems seem to be developing irreversibly. The possibility of autonomously detecting, identifying, cataloging, and killing a target – i.e., a human being

– introduces a series of consequences that will support the literature of the coming decades.

From those artificially intelligent vision machines employed in surveillance capitalism, not only crimes are detected, but an infinity of data of citizens, criminals or not, are captured and feed back to the algorithms, which typify people's behavior (historical and future). These big data do not belong to the police or the contracting state, but the multinational company providing the platform. These companies' busyness is not just to support public security, but also to turn that data into a profitable commodity, sold to anyone willing to pay for it. With these data, it is possible to shape the perception of a large part of the population that will judge and grant legitimacy to lethal force deployment. It closes the circuit of lethality.

Moreover, the spread of autonomous surveillance and weapons systems, given their dual-use, – in law enforcement and traditional conflicts – dilutes the distinction between defense and security, i.e., between the repressive and the lethal use of force. The same instrument used to fight groups of armed criminals in poor urban areas is employed against the external enemy, without distinction, without modulation of force, based merely on the criterion of efficiency.

In this way, nourished by the technology fetish, the vision machine gradually eliminates all traces of humanity in the processes of decision-making. It depoliticizes decisions, replacing political criteria for the technical order. Indecipherable algorithms trace the decision about who lives and who dies. It erases the very essence of the political, i.e., distinguishing autonomously, and without undesirable interference, between friends and enemies.

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3.

NEO-PATRIOTIC FAR-RIGHT MOVEMENTS: CONCEPTUAL DEFINITIONS, CASES, AND ANALYTICAL CHALLENGES

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THIS CHAPTER PROVIDES A DEFINITION for the concept of a neo-patriotic far right, illustrates it with examples from Latin American cases, and puts forth some analytical challenges. In the next section, we critically approach the current literature on new right-wing movements,¹ and argue for the need of a different conceptualization that makes it possible to encompass all these diverse groups and discuss other definitions illustrating the different types included in this definition. Following, we draw from the neo-Gramscian critical theory of International Relations to provide an explanation for the



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1 Throughout this chapter, we refer broadly to “movements”, encompassing groups, formal parties, and other forms of political organization.

rise of these political actors. Building on this, we propose a minimal conceptual definition guided by the theory that structures this work. To construct the concept of a neo-patriotic far right, we formulate a descriptive argument, based on a matrix typology presenting multidimensional and comprehensive categories, which are mutually exclusive and are defined by uniform principles. To illustrate the typology, we provide a deeper analysis of one of its categories, that of the neo-patriotic far right, by discussing its Latin American expressions. Finally, some reflections are made on the analytical challenges of a process that is both historically open and in constant transformation.

The need to define new right-wing movements

Many different epistemological traditions aim to analyze political and social problems. Ranging on a spectrum from reflectivism to positivism, these different points of view seek to understand, explain and (in some cases) predict these phenomena. Despite their different approaches, all these traditions must undertake a very complex task, which sometimes receives little prominence in analytical work: describing.

From our reflectivist perspective, the descriptive exercise is a key activity in which there can be no neutrality. An analytical process which seeks to observe the traits of a phenomenon, describe them, and based on that exercise construct a concept or different categories, is influenced by how our decisions are situated in history and is conditioned by both theory and methodology. Robert Darnton (1987) does well to remind us, based on Michel Foucault, that classifying is an exercise of power.

Formulating a concept that covers a group of contemporary political actors which have in a broad sense been called “new right-wing movements” requires a set of theoretical-methodological

decisions with clear political implications. This is because what the academy says on a certain issue is performative: nominating and describing generate reality and action (Perrotta and Porcelli, 2019, p.210). The first set of discussions one must approach are about the plausibility of utilizing a macro concept.

Macro (or “umbrella”) concepts may be subjected to criticisms, but these often refer more to the application of a concept than its actual formulation. That is, very often the concept is precise, but it is applied to phenomena that are not included within its definition. A macro concept lists a set of basic characteristics that make up an essential definition. These lowest common denominators, therefore, seek to articulate a parsimonious definition. To do that, we will use two dimensions to present a typology where potential values are exhaustive (classifying all cases) and exclusive (each case can only be placed within a single value).

To substantiate the formulation we propose, which conceptualizes the neo-patriotic far right within these “new right-wing movements”, it is necessary to argue why we believe this is the most parsimonious and precise definition for this set of actors. As will be seen below, we propose a minimal conceptual definition based on a matrix typology (Gerring, 2011) which becomes a macro concept, differing from the ones that have thus far been set forth in specialized literature.

Some analyses have resorted to the term “fascism” to refer to these movements (Stanley, 2019). Nevertheless, the historian, and a leading expert on fascism, Emilio Gentile (2019, p.10), points out: “I do not believe it makes any historical or political sense to claim that there is a return to fascism today, neither in Italy, in Europe nor in the rest of the world”. To extrapolate the concept, to be anachronistic,² or speak of the return of fascism as an “eternal” category,

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2 On anachronism throughout History, see Chaves Maldonado (2016).

prevents a fuller understanding of contemporary political phenomena. Given that each historical moment is singular and unrepeatable, analytical categories cannot be used over time without risking anachronisms.

The emergence of these right-wing actors also motivated historical analyses that propose analogies³ with classical fascisms. Using European cases as a starting point, historian Roger Griffin (2019, p.170) speaks of an “ideal type” of fascism which can be used as a general category in political science and as a heuristic device. Enzo Traverso (2018, p.12), also a historian, proposes using the post-fascism category to describe current new right-wing movements. It is known that the European fascisms of the early 20th century were authoritarian options adopted in different ways by dominant elites. New right-wing movements, in Traverso’s interpretation, go beyond classical fascism. They arise after the end of the historical cycle of fascism, and many do not vindicate these identities. Post-fascism is thus composed by authoritarianism, conservatism, populism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, and contempt for pluralism. His analysis underscores that these new right-wing groups lack clear opposition to communism as well as a utopian construction project; today they are markedly reactionary and presentist. The exchange of antisemitism for nativism and/or Islamophobia is also to be underscored, a change marked by the experience of colonialism (Said, 1978).

Generalizing this concept might face limitations outside Europe. For example, although some Latin American countries had clearly fascist movements, such as Brazilian Integralism founded in 1932 by Plínio Salgado (Pereira and Caldeira, 2020), others simply experienced political and social actors who were attracted by “fascism’s magnetic field” (Bucheli, 2019). The region did not mostly have true fascist experiences. Its colonial experience was different to that of

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3 On these analogies, see Devoto (2022).

Europe, which translates into a different kind of xenophobia, not specifically Islamophobic. Therefore, whilst the use of the term fascism can lead us to anachronism, post-fascism may not fit specific experiences such as those in Latin America.

The populist nature of these new right-wing movements is also highlighted in the literature. Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser (2017, p.3), define populism as a *thin ideology*, based on three key concepts: the people, the elite and the general will. They note the use of a people-elite dualism, the denial of pluralism and the potential to be associated with either the right-or left-wing. As Steven Forti (2021) points out, the concept of populism, in the same way as that of fascism, can become an obstacle to understanding new right-wing movements. The term populism is sometimes popularly and disparagingly used in political debate, while in academic analysis it reports multiple meanings, ranging from definitions with emancipatory and radical democracy traits, those that disparagingly underline the management of macroeconomic or social policy, and characterizations of leadership styles and the ways in which individuals connect with the masses.

Cas Mudde (2007; 2016, p.1-10) also sets forth the concept of a radical populist right wing, which he describes using three defining elements: authoritarianism (securitizing and criminalizing); nativism (an ethnocratic combination of nationalism and xenophobia); and populism, which faces the people against the elite. It is worth reflecting on this concept further.

The first element refers to the idea of the radical right and its scope. This concept sees political actors taking part in the political game based on democratic competition, but transforming it, specifically undermining democracy's liberal components. This is a substantial contribution to literature. Nevertheless, we believe the whole field of far-right movements should be analyzed. The field encompasses not just radical right-wing groups but also *extreme* right-wing groups. The latter act outside the system – for example, neo-Nazi

or supremacist movements, which walk alongside the radical right-wing movements in the public arena.

The second element refers to nativism. Some Latin American countries, which show clear and representative examples of new right-wing movements, such as Brazil, do not clearly identify with the nativist traits. It is reasonable to say that these right-wing groups have a clear nationalist appeal and a homogenizing view of the people. However, this does not imply nativism, but rather a combination of nationalism and sovereigntism rejecting all things foreign, thus moving away from the concepts in Mudde's proposal.

New right-wing movements do not present a united front across all areas. As Steven Forti (2020, p.15-26) points out, differences can be observed in geopolitics, values, and economics. However, we propose that the rejection of globalization is one of the lowest common denominators, constituting an essential attribute. Although radical right-wing movements have, in the sense Cas Mudde proposes, been hostile to globalization and multilateralism (2007, p.187-193), said cleavage does not emerge as one of the defining traits in his proposal. For us, the cleavage between nationalism and sovereigntism opposed to cosmopolitanism (presented around globalization) is ideological above all, and is most relevant when typifying these new right-wing movements. We propose our minimal definition of the neo-patriotic far right by developing a matrix typology taking this novel axis and the traditional left-right axis. Before that, we will explain how our proposal relates to the theory sustaining it.

The rise of neo-patriotic right-wing movements: an explanation

Our concept of a neo-patriotic far right starts and draws from the neo-Gramscian critical theory of International Relations – as developed by Robert Cox (1981; 1983; 1987) – as our main

theoretical basis.⁴ Cox's work implied a key conceptual turn and stands as the cornerstone of the neo-Gramscian critical theory of International Relations. The introduction of this critical theory makes thinking about international affairs more complex, underscoring the importance of history, the critical analysis implied in going beyond material capacities and interests, to show their relationship to ideas and institutions, composing a plurality of international orders through processes which imply the interaction between agency and structure.

By revisiting the thinking of Antonio Gramsci, Cox makes an ontological contribution redefining key categories for the analysis of international policy: State, hegemony, world order and historical structure (Bieler and Morton, 2004). This is both a theoretical proposition and a method from the standpoint of historical structures. In this way, he did not generate a prescriptive theory, but rather a critical analysis toolbox. Cox reinterpreted Gramsci's theory of the state, power and hegemony and, therefore, the concept of Historical Bloc. Power is more than an attribute or a capacity because it is composed of coercion and consent. Consent is achieved when a dominant class projects its interests as popular (or general) by use of its intellectual and moral leadership. Therefore, the State is more than the administration of coercion, because it is essential to produce shared meanings that influence how the state relates with civil society.

This method of historical structures is a heuristic device that can be applied to three areas: social forces, constituted by social relations based on relations of production; the forms of the State, and consequently its relations with civil society; and world orders, as particular configurations of forces in cycles of stability, conflict and change. Thus, a specific combination of forces implying material capacities,

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4 For a more detailed analysis, see Sanahuja (2015; 2020).

ideas and institutions – as composites of ideas and material power⁵ – generate persisting social practices which make up a specific form of structural power, which has an impact on actors' capacity for agency.

When a specific constellation of social forces constructs the “common sense of the times”, we stand before the hegemony that will characterize a Historical Bloc. Hegemony, understood as a specific historical structure and its subsequent international order, is key to maintaining stability. In the international arena, hegemony is exercised by social groups rather than by States. The transnational capitalist elites are the key actors of our time. While international institutions are the ones that embody rules and boost the expansion of hegemonic orders (given they are a product of these), they ideologically legitimate the norms of this world order and absorb counter-hegemonic ideas as means of maintaining stability. The change in historical structures lies in the origin of hegemonic ascent or decline. When structural power is weakened, more options are open for the agency of different social and political actors, including States and their geopolitical games, which entail greater instability – an “inter-regnum”, as Gramsci called it referring to the interwar period – both in the national and global political arena (Babic, 2020, p.3).

This approach helps us understand the transformations that the international system is currently undergoing, in a time marked by the crisis of globalization and the international liberal world order, which can be interpreted as signs of a deep hegemonic crisis (Sana-huja, 2020). It is within this context that we propose to set the emergence of neo-patriotic right-wing movements and understand the way they act on the international stage. In this way, the proposed conceptualization arises from applying Cox's approach.

Neo-patriots position themselves at the far right of the ideological spectrum, rejecting economic elements of globalization as well

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5 No analytical or causal pre-eminence is established among them.

as its institutions, liberal values and norms – that which has been called “globalism”. Globalism has been used in the social sciences to portray the normative or ideological dimension of globalization. In a text that has already become a classic, Ulrich Beck (2000, p.9) said: “By globalism I mean the view that the world market eliminates or supplants political action – that is, the ideology of rule by the world market, the ideology of neoliberalism”. In brief, in globalism we find an intention to de-politicize economic globalization and naturalize neoliberalism as an ideology. Steger and James (2010, p.ix-xxiii) refer to a market globalism, denoting an ideology that allows for the globalization of norms, values and meanings inspired by neoliberalism, in the era of the “end of ideology” which comes in the post-Cold War period.

These objections or rebuttals are part of a strategy which questions the current order and has the performative capacity to become a *raison d'être* for neo-patriots. It is a set of social practices which assume normative questioning or, in the words of Antje Wiener (2017, p.112), “express in their discourse their disapproval of the norms”. Within the movements’ objectives, we find the questioning of the use of international organizations. This is done by putting into action ideologized disputes around norms and mechanisms which provide them with a legitimacy of origin, process and results (Hooghe, Lenz, and Marks, 2019). In brief, neo-patriots impugn the norms, values and institutions that make up the international liberal order.

These new far-right movements have traits that set them apart from those that continue to be present and those which have been actors in the past. The characterization of these new far-right movements as neo-patriotic regards the rise of these actors as part of a global dynamic of structural change in the international system. This does not mean, however, that it disregards specific national and regional dynamics.

As has been set forth, the standpoint for this analysis is the crisis of a globalization which is understood, according to Cox (1981),

as a historical structure that encompasses material capacities, institutions, and ideas – not only as a network of economic interdependencies. From this perspective, globalization is a historical structure, which has stood for several decades, since the 1980s, and started its decline after the financial crisis in 2008. This crisis of globalization expresses itself in four dimensions.

The first dimension is economic, not only because the financial crisis in 2008 made the limits of a highly globalized and financialized capitalism very clear, but also because a change of cycle has occurred, both in terms of technology and production. On the one hand, the post-Fordist cycle of trans-nationalization is exhausting itself in terms of productivity and profitability – because the technologies and organizational forms on which that cycle has been based are in fact exhausting themselves. On the other hand, the emergence of a new technological innovation cycle also points to new ways of organizing production on a global scale. Digital platforms – among others – set a scenario that is very different in terms of the production model and the international division of labor. They also entail deep changes in employment, work relations, social protection and life expectations, with high costs for adaptation and noticeable changes in social stratification.

The second dimension refers to environmental issues. Western production and consumption patterns, which globalization has preached for, cannot be universalized. Climate change – among other problems – is an indication of the physical limits of this process of globalization. This dimension of the crisis is also integrated into rhetoric rebutting the international liberal order, with different movements providing different answers. These responses include climate change denying and questioning the need for sustainable development, seeing it as a roadblock to development. Another group of responses, often found among neo-patriots, is a series of views which are close to eco-fascisms (Stefanoni, 2021, p.157-183). Such views regard migration as a problem in this dimension, with

others proposing radical postures in conservationism which are also related to each population's "ethnic purity".

The third dimension concerns the societal limitations of globalism. Although globalization has lowered extreme poverty on a global scale and allowed for an expansion of the middle classes,⁶ it has also increased inequality and, above all, generated a true revolution in social mobility expectations – expectations which in many emerging countries are not certain to materialize. Expectations about access to consumption and wellbeing, improvement of public policies, and social mobility, in multiple cases and since the beginning of the 2010s, have begun to find their limits in Latin America due to the crisis in the commodity cycle. On the other hand, in central countries there is a trend in the opposite direction, where the middle-class expectation to hold on to status did not materialize either, creating an economic crisis that questions the social inclusion model such societies had reached after the Second World War. A common denominator in new neo-patriotic far-right movements is the exploitation of the economic crisis and frustrated well-being and social status expectations that the narrative of neoliberalist progress can no longer fulfill. This happens in the middle classes of developed countries, who face the risk of not being able to hold on to their positions and see themselves as losers in the process of globalization. It also occurs in upwardly mobile groups in developing countries, when their expectations do not materialize, as well as in the middle and upper classes – or specific groups – that sense that their position is threatened by the ascent of subaltern groups. Insecurity, uncertainty, fear, insult, and the need for protection are, therefore, elements used by new far-right movements to build their political strategy and discourse questioning neoliberalism, seeking the protection of both State and community and, by

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6 In Latin America, this fact is associated with the commodity expansion cycle during the 21st century.

extension, questioning the international liberal order. This does not imply that there is a single answer to those claims. What we find among neo-patriots ranges from ethnic-nationalist and nativist vindications of the welfare State to libertarian visions that propose the least possible intervention of the State in the economy (without renouncing ultraconservative positions).⁷

Finally, globalization has also shown its political limits both on a global scale and within countries. The very same globalization process, which boosted the ascent of emerging countries, engaging in rhetoric on effective multilateralism and global governance, has not effectively reformed the multilateral system to increase representativeness and legitimacy providing greater voice to emerging countries. Its effectiveness in managing growing interdependencies has not improved, and neither has it been able to prevent or mitigate the global risks derived from such interdependencies and ensure an adequate provision of global public goods. The 2008 crisis made it clear that the free market is unable to self-regulate. The COVID-19 pandemic has also revealed the extent to which societies and economies are interconnected regarding these risks, and how neoliberal globalization, combined with still-prevailing Westphalian sovereign logics, led to a forsaking of any approach to collectively facing them.

On the other hand, as discussed above, a broad social malaise can be observed in many countries and societies, where we see a high degree of dissatisfaction with the political system and questions being raised of its associated elites. Civil discontent, democratic dissatisfaction and the crisis in representation became structural factors, which created suitable conditions for far-right forces and leaders to appear. These are true political entrepreneurs who often resort to populist – in the sense which that expression has been given



7 Some authors point to how two very different ways live together one that is social-identitarian and one that is neoliberal authoritarian. See, for example, Ramas San Miguel (2019).

here – discourses and strategies. These have been able to rise rapidly, with traditional parties being at the same time weakened or transformed from the inside by these forces. In its politics, its rhetoric and its aesthetics, the new far-right movement is insurgent, rebellious and anti-establishment. Questioning the current order and many times managing to channel the above-mentioned malaise. This phenomenon manifests itself differently in each country, but can still be viewed as a global trend.

The actors of the neo-patriotic far-right movements embody, as was mentioned in the introduction, a double cleavage (left-right and globalization-anti-globalization). As we will set forth below, there is within this matrix a quadrant of actors which combine conservative values, anchored to a far-right movement regarding their classical positions, while challenging globalization or globalism. Examples of these include Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, José Antonio Kast in Chile, Cabildo Abierto in Uruguay, Vox in Spain, among others. We will now describe that typology and argue that one of the categories it characterizes, the neo-patriotic far right, is a macro definition which can be applied in general terms to a set of political actors who are, in a general manner, called new right-wing movements.

The concept of neo-patriotic far right

The definition we propose is a minimal one. Following Gerring (2011, p.135), in order to achieve that, we seek to

identify the bare essentials of a concept, sufficient to differentiate it extensionally without excluding any of the phenomena generally understood as part of its extension [...] Each attribute that defines a concept minimally is regarded as a necessary condition: all entities must possess this attribute in order to be considered a member of the set. Collectively, these attributes are jointly sufficient to bound the concept extensionally [...].

A minimal conceptual definition should allow us to classify clearly which cases lie inside and outside of it. To construct the concept of a neo-patriotic far right, we begin by formulating a descriptive argument based on a matrix typology with categories that are multidimensional, mutually exclusive, comprehensive and defined by uniform principles. The categories of this typology are the result of the intersection of categorical variables. In this case, two dichotomous categorical variables result in four quadrants, each quadrant holding one category, with each one of these categories being a composite type. The following figure presents the typology we propose to formulate the concept of neo-patriotic far right. The ideal types generated have in their specific historicity particular qualities, undertones and different degrees of radicalism, but always lie within that category.

FIGURE 1 – TYPES OF POSITIONING VIS-À-VIS THE CRISIS OF GLOBALIZATION, UNDERSTOOD AS A HISTORICAL STRUCTURE.

–	Political identification	Left	Right
	Globalist	Globalist left-wing movements (progressive cosmopolitan)	Globalist right-wing movements (Davos right-wing movements)
Attitude vis-à-vis globalization	Anti-globalist	Anti-globalist left-wing movements (left-wing sovereigntists)	Anti-globalist left-wing movements (neo-patriotic)

Source: prepared by the authors.

Cleavages are expressed in political competition, when the necessary interaction of adversarial ideas, government programs, policy proposals and electoral platforms takes place (Rae and Taylor, 1970; Lipset and Rokkan, 1990). The first cleavage structuring this typology is political identification with actors to the left and to the right, not only in axis dimensions regarding distributive or equity questions (Bobbio, 1995) but also new discursive elements (or culture wars). In this sense, visions about politics, society and cultural

aspects should be included, where the right-wing, and particularly far-right movements, vindicate the natural origin of certain inequalities, thus providing a basis for promoting a hierarchical social order.

We are careful to refer to right-wing and left-wing *movements*, using plural language to denote the ideological diversity within these categories. Nevertheless, the one-dimensional left-right ideological cleavage consistently groups these, simplifying and directing political debate as a valid way to counterpose party differences (Budge, 2006). At the same time, it is also an efficient cognitive shortcut for voters (Downs, 1957). This distinction between left and right is exhaustive and exclusive because, as Maurice Duverger pointed out:

A dualism of parties does not always exist, but there is almost always a dualism of tendencies. Politics implies a selection between two types of solutions: intermediary solutions are associated with one or the other. This is the same as saying that the center does not exist in politics: there can be a centrist party, but not a centrist tendency, a centrist doctrine. We call the “center” the geometrical place where moderates from opposing tendencies meet: right-wing moderate and left-wing moderate. Every center is divided against itself, split between two halves: center-left and center-right. Given that the center is nothing else than the artificial agglomeration of the right-wing faction of the left, and the left-wing faction of the right [...] Every time that public opinion is divided on fundamental issues, it tends to crystallize around both opposite poles. (Duverger, 1981, p.240-42)

On the other hand, the second cleavage is centered on attitudes to globalization, understanding it not only in its economic trans-nationalist dimension but also in terms of accepting its norms and institutions – portrayed, as discussed above, as “globalism” – and their implications in terms of open, diverse and plural societies. This, in terms of agency, refers to the possibility for refractory actors to propose “culture wars” which make it possible to re-politicize

affairs and construct an anti-establishment agenda, which appears in polarizing discourses. The choice of this cleavage derives from the analysis driven by neo-Gramscian critical theory that we use to understand the current historical moment.

In that double cleavage (left-right and globalization-anti-globalization) we find a quadrant of actors, with conservative or reactionary values anchored on the right or the far right insofar as their classical positions, but whom at the same time reject globalization or globalism. The elements that distinguish these anti-globalist right-wing movements, which we call neo-patriotic, are the different forms of extreme nationalism and rejection of globalism, the international liberal order and multilateralism, in how they regard foreign policy. Nevertheless, before we devote ourselves to this quadrant which is the one we are particularly interested in, we will go over the other three.

Globalist left-wing movements are a type of political actor embodying different forms of cosmopolitan progressiveness, including sectors of cosmopolitan left-wing movements. This category also includes actors who, although critical of some of globalization's effects, propose the need to regulate globalization through regional or global institutions (rules) to protect labor and social rights, as well as the environment. These visions embody, in different ways and to different degrees, a way of conceiving global citizenship that is respectful of diversity, or of the sustainable development global agenda, with inclusive regulations for immigration, based on recognizing human rights. As an instrument of this, the actors in this family have promoted an advanced regionalism, with strong regional organizations or a new multilateralism for fair and inclusive governance of globalization. Socially, they are also the expression of middle and middle-upper urban and educated classes, related to the service sector, with a stronger presence of women and young people. In the ideation dimension they can embrace inputs from alter-globalization and pluralist readings of neo-Kantian cosmopolitanism

which are far from those limiting themselves to western universalism (De Sousa Santos, 2005). They encompass progressive sectors of social-democratic parties, as well as other left-wing forces, global NGOs such as Oxfam and movements such as Occupy Wall Street or Welcome Refugees, through transnational coalitions that, at the time, were organized around the Porto Alegre World Social Forum.

Globalist right-wing movements include a series of political actors who favor liberal democracy, free trade and private companies: prone to deepening global economic integration and in favor of globalization's *status quo*. Their most accomplished expression is ideological and normative globalism or ordoglobalism (Slobodian, 2018) of transnational elites linked to companies and global finances gathered in the Davos World Economic Forum. Politically, they include actors of both the center-right and centrist sectors of European social-democracy and more moderate sectors of the Democratic Party in the United States. From an ideation perspective, they assume a discourse which is sometimes permeated by technocracy, often using doctrine produced by international financial organizations as their sustaining argument. Their electoral base could be briefly described as integrated by richer, more educated, more internationalized urban sectors, as well as middle-class segments tied to the economy's formal and service sectors, with interests in the free mobility of factors, more intensive in their knowledge and, therefore, relatively more protected from free trade.

Anti-globalist left-wing movements or sovereigntist left-wing movements share a deglobalizing position. This category includes Eurosceptic or anti-European anti-western political actors – such as Syriza in Greece or the Bolivarian movements grouped in the *Alianza Bolivariana de los Pueblos de Nuestra América* – as well as social and environmentalist movements which pursue self-management, degrowth, and local economies. They radically oppose globalization, which they identify with neoliberalism, free trade and the actions of multinational companies. Due to their hegemonic nature,

they also reject international norms and institutions. This rejection has a left-wing character because it denounces the asymmetrical nature and structure of both the international system and its order, which is crystallized in different national realities.

The final quadrant corresponds to the category of anti-globalist or neo-patriotic right-wing movements. Sovereignist and nationalist right-wing political actors are included here, as well as those that are deeply Eurosceptic (within the European Union) (Pardijs and Dennison, 2016). In the economic sphere, they may have different proposals which are alternatives to the international liberal order of the globalization which they oppose, encompassing positions that range from being against economic liberalization – occasionally big business and multinational corporations – to libertarian positions. In both cases, they reject the current order. In general terms, they are traditionalists when it comes to culture, social practices and gender, as well as religion. They are more likely to resort to politics of fear associated to terrorism or common crime wary of social diversity and contrary to multiculturalism, and also are, to a greater or lesser degree, nativist, xenophobic and anti-immigration. In the social dimension, they also have a view that rejects the forms of the State which globalization crystallized, although they suggest antagonistic models which range from visions where the State totally withdraws all the way to chauvinistic forms of wellness where social policies are constrained to the nationals, with these being a homogeneous group that rejects diversity. In terms of the environment, they also converge in rejecting a globalist order, but propose different alternatives, ranging from those who oppose or question global agreements about sustainable development or climate change, to different forms of eco-fascism. Their leaders are the expression of new kinds of Caesarism which have arisen from a crisis in hegemonism. Socially, they bring together globalization's losers – be they real or self-perceived – such as middle and lower-middle classes affected by unemployment and deindustrialization, as well as rural sectors and older

people who reject cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism. In their vision of the world and foreign policy, they are markedly nationalistic, and question being subjected to multilateral institutions and norms. In the defense of national interest, in a geopolitical key, security stands above all, although in order to achieve it they oscillate from isolationism or retrenchment to the power politics of a hegemonic matrix. Some neo-patriots such as Vox in Spain or Chega in Portugal are Atlantists, while others such as Matteo Salvini, Marine Le Pen or even Donald Trump himself are closer to Vladimir Putin (Stefanoni, 2021, p.61). The Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has therefore brought tensions between these actors and within. In their actions, they redefine what they understand by popular, national and international, based on the Schmittian “friend-enemy” distinction as an autonomous categorization (Schmitt, 1991), providing political sense to their identity. In addition to the far right in Europe and the United States, herein are Vladimir Putin’s nationalism in the Russian Federation, Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Turkey, Narendra Modi in India, or the nationalisms of other developing countries.

We must also point out that such nationalism does not impair converging international actions or formalized alliances. The key element of that identity is a new reactionary internationalism based on the defense of tradition vis-à-vis globalization and cosmopolitanism. Here, the re-institution of a traditional “Arcadia”⁸ provides meaning to a process for re-politization and rejection of the liberal order, in its national, regional and global dimensions, of its universalist and cosmopolitan discourses, and their teleologies of human

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8 This name refers to a region in Ancient Greece, evoked by the poet Virgil, to refer to an imaginary community that lives in peace and harmony. It is contrary to the Utopia of Renaissance thinker Thomas More, since the latter is the result of human creation, while Arcadia is the spontaneous fruit of a natural way of life, which has not been tainted by modernity, or “civilizing corruption”. Therefore, it is a concept that opposes the idea of progress.

progress. To sum up, these actors do not just question globalization as an established order; they also seek to construct another, alternative, world order of a reactionary nature (Sanahuja and López Burian, 2020a).

Ultra-Nationalists such as Trump, Bolsonaro or Orban, add to their criticism of globalization, the questioning of globalist elites under them and their attempts to promote global governance through international organizations. In their political rhetoric, the term globalism is deliberately used imprecisely and becomes a useful scarecrow for conspiracy theories and cultural wars in which the nation's ills and the threats posed on it come from the outside. It provides a basis for conspiracy theories in which the world is ruled by plutocrats and by international employees who are not held accountable. The way Orban and other far-right leaders have attacked George Soros provides a clear example. These elites, they allege, rule in favor of an establishment whose interests are opposed to those of "the people", the community, culture and tradition, thus threatening the freedom of sovereign nations. In this way, a particular friend-enemy populist discourse is constructed, in which the "true" people confront foreign elites, and the internal political opponent is accused of being disloyal and a traitor to the nation. This type of discourse has been frequented in Orban, Donald Trump (Stack, 2016), or in Jair Bolsonaro and his mentor, Olavo de Carvalho (Casarões, 2019).

The rejection of norms and international organizations and the defense of national sovereignty respond in part to traits which are deeply rooted in the democratic culture of the United States, which explains the libertarian and sovereign strands of the neo-patriotic far right. If sovereignty comes from the people, it is alleged, international norms have a serious legitimacy problem. However, in the neo-patriotic far right, conspiracy theories are often introduced. In these theories, the world's cosmopolitan elite threatens both the people and the nation. It is also worth noting that these

conspiracy-paranoid visions have a long standing in the extreme right, fascism and European antisemitism (Zimmer, 2018).

Latin American neo-patriots

In Latin America, neo-patriotic right-wing movements have impacted national political systems, regional integration processes and regionalism, as well as on the positions adopted before the international liberal order following their ideology, political action and discourse. At the beginning of 2021, four out of ten Latin Americans lived under regimes headed by leaders, political groups or parties which can be located within the right-wing or neo-patriotic far right category. Such is the case of Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and El Salvador. In Uruguay, neo-patriots are part of the government coalition. In Argentina, Chile and Costa Rica, neo-patriots have had electoral performances which have been positive for their interests and their discourses shape the political agenda and affect the whole political system, generating reactions in other actors.

The most prominent case in the region was, without a doubt, that of Brazil. In 2021, the then president, Jair Bolsonaro embodied clear elements of rejection of the international liberal order and a political position at the national, regional and global level which questions, in sovereigntist terms, the institutions, norms and values of cosmopolitan globalization (Casarões and Farias, 2021) – including global health issues (Ventura and Bueno, 2021). Bolsonaro has also pushed securitizing and punitive agendas,⁹ as well as social and moral conservatism (Belém Lopes and Carvalho, 2020), includ-

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9 In Paraguay, this security discourse appeared together with conservative elements who were opposed to the right of abortion and egalitarian marriage, based on religious beliefs. This was seen during president Mario Abdo Benítez's (of the ANR – Asociación Nacional Republicana –, Partido Colorado) time in office (Solís and Cerna, 2019, p.263-266).

ing revisionist appeals of the recent past, vindicating the last military dictatorship (1964-1985). These discourses work together with resistance to international organizations, and a strong anti-globalist position which contributes to Brazil's distance from regional integrationist, coordination and cooperation projects (Sanahuja and López Burian, 2020b, p.55-58; Saraiva and Albuquerque, 2020). During Donald Trump's presidency in the United States, Bolsonaro showed an almost automatic alignment with his leader of reference (Guimarães and Silva, 2021).

Colombian president Iván Duque took center stage in consolidating Uribism (Gutiérrez, 2019). Internationally, he continued the strategic relationship with the United States, hardening his position towards Venezuela and stopping regional integration processes (Tauss, Pardo, and Graaff, 2019). Domestically, this political group, the Centro Democrático, revolved around a securitarian and punitive discourse, and established an alliance with evangelical conservative sectors, opposing the sexual, reproductive and gender rights agenda (Amaya, 2017; Hernández, 2018; Rodríguez-Raga and Wills-Otero, 2021) and the inter-American agenda on such matters.¹⁰ Colombian neo-patriots showed strong alignment with U.S. president Donald Trump's administration (Sanahuja and López Burian, 2020b). In 2021, Vox – an expression of the Spanish neo-patriotic far right – chose Colombia to hold the I Regional Meeting of the Madrid Forum in Latin America, showing signs of establishing relationships within the neo-patriotic family.

In Ecuador, two parties cooperate and begin to show neo-patriotic traits, the Partido Social Cristiano, founded in the 1950s, and

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10 The same discourse can be found among Bolivian neo-patriots that supported the coup which overthrew President Evo Morales and led to a wave of violence and state repression against the social movements which opposed them. Luis Fernando Camacho, leader of the Comité Cívico Pro Santa Cruz, and Chi Hyun Chung, the Korean-Bolivian politician and evangelical minister, strong opponents of women's rights and diversity agendas, are examples of neo-patriotic forces.

the Movimiento Creando Oportunidades (CREO) which was the electoral vehicle created ten years ago by banker Guillermo Lasso so he could make it to government (Navia and Reguero, 2021). One of the central points of these parties' conservative agendas is to oppose the women's rights agenda. Among these political leaders, some identify with the Opus Dei and pro-life militants. There are also neo-patriotic type groups who get close to Vox in Spain through the Madrid Charter and the Madrid Forum.¹¹ As Recalde Velasco (2021, p.12) points out:

Adhering to the Madrid Forum happens through the Movimiento Libres to which [Esteban] Torres [Cobo, coordinator of the seats of the Partido Social Cristiano y Aliados in Ecuador's National Assembly] belongs. This is an organization made up mostly by young people from the sierras who state that they stand for the defense of freedom, equality before the law, family and private property, and against "the Marxist left, progressives and socialists" while at the same time continuing to caution that they seek to unmask the "cowardly little right wing which has had 14 years to confront 21st century Socialism, and the only thing it has done is make pacts". These are new cadres which seek to stand further to the right than the PSC and CREO, and eventually no longer feel represented by them. To their antagonism with the left, which they refer to as "Castro Chavism", they add much more conservative values regarding family, women's rights, environmentalism, even vindicating "Hispanic" symbols. He also refers to ties with, in addition to Vox, "Bolsonaro from Brazil and Agustín Laje in Argentina" (El Universo, 2020). In their dispute against women's organizations, the defense of human rights and indigenous movements, they catalog these as bearers of supremacist ideas who are sheltered by the UN, the WHO seeking to destroy the rule of law in Ecuador (Ambatonews, 2020). In security terms they support "a heavy hand" and bearing arms. Their

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11 Among the Madrid Charter signatories there are several leaders and activists from the hardest sector of the opposition to Nicolás Maduro's regime.

electoral project remains to be defined, but nevertheless, having noticed that political organizations which dominate the field of the right also tend to radicalize their discourse, there would be a much more fertile terrain for them to grow.

This same anti-globalism observed in Ecuadorians neo-patriots also shows in the case of El Salvador's president, Nayib Bukele. Different analyses of this case underline illiberal elements in his government, confronting the Legislative and Judicial Power (Salas Oroño and Calderón Castillo, 2021), while also deploying a personalist political style with reactionary discursive elements in culture and anti-establishment discourse elements in politics (Monestier and Vommario, 2010). Another element he shares with neo-patriots is a remilitarization dynamic that erodes the democratic system, marked by civilians who resort to the Armed Forces as political allies (Verdes-Montenegro and Rodríguez-Pinzón, 2020). However, when it comes to giving meaning to a series of political confrontations, both with the Judicial and the Legislative power, perhaps the clearest element of his anti-globalist position refers to the strategic use of the figure of George Soros. Bukele has argued, with no consistent proof, that Soros' Open Society Foundation is the central guiding and supporting the actors by which the Salvadoran president feels attacked. On his Twitter account, Bukele has accused some of his opponents of being "George Soros' thugs" (Elsalvadorgram, 2021a). The possibility for "disaggregation" from the outside, supported by "anti-national elites" is a key trait of neo-patriots, even using discourse strategies that include conspiracy theories. In August 2021, for example, the digital press medium *El Faro* published an investigation which suggested possible links between Bukele's government and main El Salvadorian gangs, with such links sustaining a historical drop in the murder rate which the government credits to public policy. Faced with this situation, and alluding to a meme from a U.S. reality show, the president posted on his

Twitter account: “I don’t know Rick, it looks like Soros...” (Elsalvadorgram, 2021b).

Cabildo Abierto (CA) has been a member of Uruguay’s government coalition since it took office in 2020. It is the third largest party within the coalition and a key element for the government’s political stability. In return for legislative support, the Partido Nacional (PN) offered CA a series of public offices. The Ministries of Public Health, Housing and Territory, and the vice ministry of National Security are three of the most relevant positions held by CA – a party created at the beginning of 2019. Close to the Armed Forces (Monestier, Nocetto, and Rosenblatt, 2021), both active and retired, the party is led by retired general Guido Manini Ríos, an ex-army commander in chief. CA has the traits of a neo-patriotic right wing, while at the same time rooted in Uruguayan history, taking up ideas, discourses and political practices of some of the Uruguayan right-wing movements (López Burian, 2019). Its agenda proposes a “heavy hand” marked by punitivism and vindicating authority. It appeals to national tradition to oppose the new rights agenda promoted by the cosmopolitan left wing (Sanahuja and López Burian, 2020b). It also questions the role of some international organizations in terms of sovereignty, even in subjects related to Human Rights violations during the last dictatorship (1973–1985) on which it adopts a revisionist position of Uruguay’s recent history relativizing State terrorism. On the other hand, it shows its opposition to what these right-wing movements refer to as “gender ideology”, showing markedly anti-globalist traits. As an example, their leader Manini Ríos, pointed out that, the “most damaging” left wing for the Uruguayan people is the one he believes is linked to George Soros:

[...] for following that white-collar criminal called George Soros, whose policies are constantly dividing Uruguayans. It is no longer worker against boss, employee against employer; now it is women against husband and children. It is such perversity that it is taught in the first years of school and

that perversity is carried forth by fanatic left-wing militants, the Sorist left wings. (La Diaria, 2019)

In Argentina, economist Javier Milei got a seat in the House of Representatives after his party won 17 percent of votes in the 2021 parliamentary elections. These votes and his discourse and performance promoted incentives for the mainstream Argentine right, *Propuesta Republicana* (PRO), whose most right-wing faction competes with Milei for votes. With libertarian appeals, using strategic provocation, false dilemmas and a strong anti-establishment discourse (ranging from climate crisis denialism to allusions to the fight against “cultural Marxism”), it brings back conservative elements on women’s rights, converging with the alt-right agenda (Delle Donne, 2021), thus turning to the far right (Stefanoni, 2021, p.97-130).

In Costa Rica, the Libertarian Movement supported candidate Fabrizio Alvarado, an evangelical minister and leader of *Restauración Nacional* (RN), who came close to success in the second round of the 2018 presidential elections. Alvarado managed to polarize the dispute based on a conservative agenda that underscored the rejection of same-sex marriage. This matter had a markedly anti-globalist tone, because the Inter American Court of Human Rights had been asked by the Costa Rican government to analyze the norm and declared it constitutional. Alvarado’s party questioned this from a sovereigntist standpoint, and displayed arguments rejecting the international liberal order, a core trait of neo-patriots.

In 2021, José Antonio Kast made it past the second electoral round in Chile, presenting a discourse that can be framed within the radical populist right, in the sense posed by Cas Mudde (Campos, 2021). His discourse is marked by authoritarian elements which vindicate Pinochet’s legacy, punitive and securitarian, strongly reactive to gender agendas and clearly anti-globalist, all of which makes it possible to place him within the definition of neo-patriotic right movement we are proposing. Kast’s positions influenced some areas

of ex-president Sebastián Piñera's agenda, who took some international decisions that converged with the neo-patriotic agenda (Sanahuja and López Burian, 2020b). Kast is also a good example of the ties between neo-patriotic right-wings, both within the region – with Bolsonarism – as well as in the international arena – where he has clearly become close to Vox.

Concluding remarks: the story does not end here

Neo-patriots, given that they are far-right groups, naturalize inequality based on the idea of hierarchy, authority and order. They strongly oppose globalization, based on the reconstruction of the notion of *the people* counterposed to national and global elites, while reacting to and challenging the liberal world order. Nevertheless, they also drive a reactionary internationalism (Sanahuja and López Burian, 2020a), while appealing to the idea of a “return” to a time when tradition and its values had not yet been corrupted by globalism. Furthermore, as John Ikenberry (2018, p.10) argues, the crisis of the international liberal order expresses a great transformation in its economic and social bases, which in terms of Karl Polanyi (2017), questions collective assumptions of the system's legitimacy. In this new critical context, Latin America could stand before the emergence of a new type of reactionary actors, known as “rojipardos” (Forti, 2021, p.182-230). With sovereigntist elements, the rojipardos have historically been small and extreme groups, which take on left-wing discourses and mottoes (Forti, 2020). In 2021, the Peruvian neo-patriots, embodied in Keiko Fujimori, were defeated in the elections. Pedro Castillo, her opponent and Peru's president from 2021 to 2022 had shown social conservative elements, rejected the women's rights agenda and included punitive elements in the security agenda. Castillo may be drifting towards neo patriotism, becoming a Latin American rojipardo.

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4.

U.S.-CHINA HEGEMONIC DISPUTES AND THE PROSPECTS FOR DEVELOPMENT IN LATIN AMERICA

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Introduction

THE GROWING PRESENCE OF CHINA IS A CRUCIAL feature of contemporary Latin American International Relations. At the beginning of the 21st century, the growth of domestic consumption at levels higher than that of national production expanded Chinese demand for commodities, which increased the prices of some primary products. It was in this context that China's relations with Latin America gained significant



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momentum, re-dimensioning the relevance of this country to the region. For example, between 2002 and 2011, exports to China, as a share of total Latin America's exports grew from 1.7 percent in 1990 to 9.4 percent in the 2000s (Perrotti, 2015, p.49). Similarly, China became the primary source of bilateral loans to Latin America in 2014, with credits exceeding US\$ 22 billion (Niu, 2015). Beyond the economy, China has also become a relevant political partner of several LAC countries, notably Venezuela. Although it was not the only defining element of the political context at the time, there is little doubt that the political cycle experienced by the region, known as "the pink tide", and characterized by the successive victories of center-left political alternatives, cannot be dissociated from the impacts of the Chinese rise on the international economy.

A situation of this magnitude would be significant in any context, but it acquires prominence in Latin America, given that the region constitutes the most traditional zone of influence of the United States of America in the world. The asymmetry of power and the density of ties that structure inter-American relations are such that their characterization through the lens of hegemony is possible from the most distinct theoretical traditions, from realism to Marxism. Indeed, the level of Sino-Latin American relations aroused attention and concerns in Washington, which can be detected both in official positions and in academic reflections.

As expected, this phenomenon stimulated a growing literature that assesses the impacts of China's inroads in the region (Bernal-Meza, 2020; Ellis, 2019; Gardini, 2021; Tokatlian, 2008; Wise and Chonn Ching, 2018). Although rich and diverse, usually this literature is driven by two questions: the meaning of China-Latin American relations for U.S.-China strategic competition and the implication of those ties for Latin American economies. However, a significant drawback in a segment of those works is to assume the U.S. decline without further analysis and, consequently, they do not consider its continuing influence, even if in a changed

context of competition (e.g., Bernal-Meza, 2020b). At the same time, different authors overestimate the positive consequences of Chinese trade and investments for Latin American development (e.g., Vadell, 2019).

In this chapter, we address the current state of China-Latin America-U.S. relations aiming to discuss their potential implications for the region's economic development. We argue that moderation is the key to analyzing China's increasing influence in the Western Hemisphere. It is important not to assume the United States' decline or ignore the continuity of its regional power, especially in the military and economic dimensions. As stated by Long (2016, p.519), "a [...] century of asymmetry is not erased in a decade, especially when the material and social bases of this asymmetry remain strong". Similar cautiousness is necessary when analyzing the local effects of the Chinese presence on Latin America. It is important not to assume an era of autonomy for Latin American countries or increased prospects for regional development since there are reasons for skepticism regarding the scenarios of structural changes relating to the Chinese presence. The United States perceives Chinese advances as a threat to its hegemony and strives to contain it through financing and strengthening partnerships with different domestic actors. What we see in the region is more a hegemonic dispute than a hegemonic transition.

The text is divided into three sections: the first contextualizes the U.S.-China hegemonic dispute in Latin America, considering the global context, American and Chinese perspectives, and the second presents data on trade and arms sales, comparing U.S. and Chinese enterprises in the region. The third section analyzes the competition from a Latin American perspective, debating its impacts in terms of development.

The global context and perspectives on U.S.-China hegemonic dispute

China's rising economic and geopolitical clout has triggered extensive literature that debates the status of China as a global power and the possibilities of it defying the United States' global hegemony. To analyze this process, the first necessary step is distinguishing between hegemony and supremacy. Such a distinction, it is worth saying, can only make sense outside of the conventional wisdom of realist tradition and its focus on economic and military power asymmetries. From a neo-Gramscian perspective, hegemony is a form of dominance sustained not only in the pillars of force but also in a widely accepted consensus (Dutkiewicz, Casier, and Scholte, 2021; Gill, 2008). Robert Cox (1981) claims that constructing a global hegemony involves backing global orders and that its promotion is connected to a historical structure based on ideas, institutions, and material capabilities (Cox, 1981). While material capabilities are necessary for hegemony, they are not enough for its formation and maintenance: hegemonic orders can only be established when they gain the acquiescence of those under their rule (Cox, 1981, p.139).

Although the literature on the existence of a current hegemonic transition is extensive, there is little consensus regarding the meanings of China's rise to the current world order. While some authors understand its growth as a surmountable challenge, others see the current period as definitely marked by U.S. decline. From a liberal-internationalist tradition, Ikenberry (2018) understands that the crisis faced by the current world order is due to the weakening of U.S. leadership but comments that the liberal values and institutions are strong and can survive the transition to a multipolar world. On the other hand, Kupchan (2014) predicts that emerging powers will not conform to the global arrangements of today but will strive to formulate new world orders.

There is also no consensus when it comes to the critical Marxist-inspired literature. Giovanni Arrighi (2007) sees the current process as a terminal crisis of the United States hegemony, while Panitch and Gindin (2019, p.2) argue that the United States “firmly remains at the center of world capitalism” since it is the largest destination for exports and investments and the role of the dollar is not contested. Panitch and Gindin concede, however, that Trump’s government influenced the ideological legitimization of U.S. hegemony.

A third position is held by Li Xing and Bernal-Meza (2021), who see the current crisis as the return of capitalism’s intra-core rivalries and argue that, since 2018, the United States and China’s economies are less complementary and more marked by competition. Indeed, regardless of Chinese intentions, the United States government increasingly perceives the rising Asian country as a global threat to its power. The Fact Sheet on the 2022 National Defense Strategy, for example, defines as a U.S. priority “defending the homeland, paced to the growing multi-domain threat posed by the PRC [Popular Republic of China]” (U.S. Department of Defense, 2022). Therefore, the incumbent hegemon already sees China as a challenge.

China’s rise defies the material predominance of the United States economically since it is expected to become the largest economy in the world and strategically since it is increasing its military spending. Regarding the ideational challenge, China’s impacts are more diffuse and an object of divergent perspectives. Departing from the idea of “network capitalism”, Nordin and Weissmann (2018) argue that Chinese development policies, notably the Belt and Road Initiative, can reinforce the narrative of China as a pioneer, better suited to lead global capitalism than the United States. China’s economy has grown while it was interconnected with the current world order; China has profited from today’s global arrangements. Maintaining peace and stability is vital for the continuity of Chinese growth and internal needs, so it is not expected

that the Asian power would openly defy global institutions and ideational arrangements.

However, the country does promote alternative organizations and arrangements, such the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the BRICS forum (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa). The Chinese domestic institutions, as well as its economic policies, do not conform to the hegemony of liberal democracy and neoliberalism. Moreover, China presents itself as a developing country and maintains a foreign policy discourse based on the defense of sovereignty, “which necessarily goes against the structure of the existing imperial system” (Foster, 2021). From a different angle, constructivist authors concur to this view by stressing the unlikelihood of China leading a transition from within, given the contradictory nature of its authoritarian regime and the democratic values at the core of the current global order (Allan, Vucetic, and Hopf, 2018).

This global process also affects Latin America. Chinese involvement in Latin America is part of its global strategy of “going out” – encouraging public and private investments abroad – and should be understood as part of a global process, marked by Chinese rise and influence in the developing world (Armony and Strauss, 2012; Svampa and Slipak, 2015). The region is not the main priority for the United States or China. For China, Latin America is less important than Asia or Africa but constitutes a counterpoint to the United States’ greater interest in the Indo-Pacific (Bernal-Meza, 2020b). For the incumbent power, the prospect of losing its traditional zone of influence is increasingly perceived as a national security problem. Preventing the influence of extra-hemispheric powers in the Americas is a constant in U.S. foreign policy that can be traced back to the 19th century and the paradigm of the Monroe Doctrine. Therefore, it was expected that the hegemonic power would react to the presence of extra-hemispheric actors in Latin America.

In an article published in 2012, Gonzalo Paz analyzes previous hegemonic challenges in the Western Hemisphere to assess if China

was a challenger to U.S. hegemony. He stated that China exerted political restraint in the region and recognized U.S. preeminence, while the United States aimed to shape, but not prevent Chinese regional influence (Paz, 2012). Nowadays, however, the U.S. position is more confrontationist, since it explicitly reasserts the Monroe doctrine and the narrative of the Chinese threat. Markers of hegemonic challenge analyzed by Paz (2012), such as perception of rivalry and rhetoric of good versus evil, now reframed as democracy versus authoritarianism, are present in current U.S. foreign policy discourse directed towards the region, as explained below. As Paz (2012) states, the perception of challenge by the incumbent power is sufficient to generate political effects.

Bernal-Meza (2020a) defines China as a new great power in Latin America and a potential challenge to the United States' regional hegemony since it has become an indispensable partner for South American countries. This idea is reinforced by extensive growth in Chinese-Latin American trade, making the Asian country the leading trade partner of Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay. China also became a relevant player in investment, which has diminished the impact of isolation from traditional financial markets for countries such as Argentina, Ecuador, and Venezuela.

A significant part of the literature interprets this increased presence as a "sign of the erosion of both the power and the geopolitical position of the United States in the region" (Nolte, 2013, p.589). During the first decade of the century, literature that defined the Western Hemisphere as a post-hegemonic space appeared, reflecting Latin America's quests for autonomy, China's rise, and the perceived neglect of U.S. foreign policy (Crandall, 2011; Drezner, 2015; Riggirozzi and Tussie, 2012). In addition, Svampa and Slipak (2015) coined the term "Beijing Consensus" to encompass the increase in the prices and volume of commodities exported from the region, triggered by the Chinese demands for commodities. In the authors' understanding, this process diminished the U.S. influence while reproducing a peripheral

international insertion in the international division of labor (Svampa, 2019; Svampa and Slipak, 2015). However, China's rise has relevant limitations, and it occurs in the context of the continuing importance of U.S. trade and cooperation with Latin American countries.

China's regional influence is predominantly economic. There is no apparent Chinese intention of projecting military power or positioning military bases in the subcontinent, and it presents itself as a benevolent and peaceful country, respectful of sovereignty and promoter of development (Cepik, 2019; Paz, 2012; Wise and Chonn Ching, 2018). China's foreign policy discourse is based on the ideas of promoting peace and development, present on the long-held Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence: "mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence" (Xi Jinping, 2014). China's Action Plan on the Belt and Road Initiative reinforces the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence – showing the continuity of such framing of its international economic expansion (The People's Republic of China, 2015). Xi Jinping (2014) also promotes the ideas of "common development" and "win-win cooperation", suggesting that Chinese inroads would lead to economic benefits for Latin American countries.

Chinese official documents claim that its presence in Latin America follows an "independent foreign policy of peace", is based on win-win cooperation, and contributes to the region's development – presenting the ideas of shared development and harmony (The People's Republic of China, 2016). Some of these principles are convergent to Latin American states' traditional foreign policy discourse, especially the ideas of development, non-interference, and equality, and a segment of Latin American scholars interprets this situation as contributing to Latin America's quest for autonomy (Harris, 2015; Vadell, 2019). On the other hand, China's rhetoric also aims to appease the United States and avoid the hegemonic power perceiving itself as a threat (Paz, 2012).

Chinese engagement is partially conducted via great projects, such as the Belt and Road Initiative, and is crescent in the telecommunication and information areas, which are seen by U.S. counterparts as indirectly producing geopolitical transformations, especially in recent years. Moreover, while it claims not to hurt the U.S. position, China's documents also reinforce the quest to "advance multi-polarization" (The People's Republic of China, 2016). Even if it is far from a military threat, U.S. counterparts perceive it with caution and see its presence as having dual consequences.

Jenkins (2021) argues that three perspectives about the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) exist: one that sees it as beneficial to receiving countries, another that sees it as harmful, and a third one that understands it as a branding mechanism that does not relevantly change China's international behavior. According to his study, the effects of BRI on Latin America are not substantive since it does not change China's policy statements or trends in economic relations. When it comes to policy perspectives, however, there is no doubt. The military division responsible for operations in Central and South America, the U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM), perceives BRI as having regional geostrategic consequences. According to the former USSOUTHCOM commander, Craig Faller,

With 19 Latin American and Caribbean nations now participating in the One Belt One Road Initiative and pledges of at least \$150 billion in loans, the PRC is now the region's largest investor and creditor, practicing the same type of predatory financing and "no strings attached" largesse it has wielded in other parts of the world. On the defense side, this includes "gifts" of equipment to regional militaries and aiming to copy our successful military education program. Beyond One Belt One Road, 25 out of 31 countries in the region host Chinese infrastructure projects. Most concerning, certain investments have strategic value for future military uses. Chinese investment in numerous deepwater ports and infrastructure on both sides of the Panama Canal could enable the Chinese

military to threaten sea lanes vital to global commerce and the movement of U.S. forces. (USSOUTHCOM, 2020)

Unsurprisingly, different U.S. scholars and policymakers interpret China's expanding presence in Latin America through geopolitical lenses and reproduce the conception of the region as an American area of influence. As widely known, in 2018, former Secretary of State Rex Tillerson claimed that the Monroe Doctrine is still valid and that it guides U.S. efforts in the region; in his words, "it is as relevant today as it was the day it was written" (Tillerson, 2018). More recently, in what may have been a lapse, Joe Biden has denied that Latin America is the U.S. backyard, only to claim that it is U.S. "front yard" (Biden, 2022).

The U.S. military has also extensively monitored China's regional inroads, which are documented in the U.S. Southern Command commander's testimonials before Congress. At least since 2019, the commanders have described China as a malign actor in the region and commented on its activities (USSOUTHCOM, 2019a; 2019b). In its 2018 action plan sent to Congress, Southcom commander Kurt Tidd admitted that China is not a military threat to the region. However, he also presented the Asian country's economic presence as having consequences for U.S. interests, claiming that "China, Russia, and Iran are courting some of our most strategically important Latin American and Caribbean partners and supporting *authoritarian, anti-American regimes*" (USSOUTHCOM, 2018, emphasis added). In 2022, the current Southcom commander, Laura Richardson, claimed that China is the region's main long-term threat faced by the United States while reiterating its authoritarian nature and claiming that its presence has a negative influence on Latin American institutions (USSOUTHCOM, 2022).

The argument that China has an impact on democracy also converges with the current trend on U.S. foreign policy of categorizing

allies as “democratic” and rivals as “authoritarian”, creating a narrative of competition between different kinds of states. The organization of a Summit of Democracies by President Biden in 2021 is an example of this movement, as well as the non-invitation of Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua for the Summit of the Americas in 2022.

A relevant example in the academia of presenting China as a threat both for Latin America democracies and for U.S. hegemony is the position adopted by Evan Ellis, a U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute professor and a leading voice in the debate regarding Chinese and Russian presence in the Americas. In a testimony for the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, he declared that

The collective, long-term result of China’s pursuit of its economic objectives and supporting activities in the political, institutional, security, and informational spheres is evolution toward a region ever more economically dependent on the PRC, with ever fewer democratic regimes, increasingly less disposed to cooperate with the United States on shared interests regarding security, rule of law and good governance, democracy and human rights. [...] At the extreme, China’s expanding influence gives it real options to operate in the region in the context of a future conflict with the PRC, including obtaining intelligence, acting against U.S. deployment and sustainment activities, creating crises in the region that distract U.S. decision-makers from the conflict in Asia, or even putting the U.S. homeland at risk by conducting military operations from the bases and facilities of partners in the region, even without the provocation or expense of establishing formal basing agreements in advance. (Ellis, 2021, p.4-5)

Indeed, not all the U.S. literature on the subject is alarmist or geopolitically oriented. Wise (2021), for example, defines Chinese-Latin American economic relations as pragmatic and compelled by China’s raw commodities demands (Wise, 2021). According to Creutzfeldt (2016), China’s economic priorities relate

to its development objectives and energy needs (Creutzfeldt, 2016). However, the rivalry display is recurrent from U.S. official perspective – making it clear that it is framed as a competition by the U.S. government, despite China's denials (The White House, 2017; USSOUTHCOM, 2019b).

Therefore, the United States perceives China as affecting its regional primacy in economic and geostrategic terms and attempts to react to the perceived decline in its hegemony. The dispute also has ideational dimensions, with the United States constructing a narrative of Chinese influence as encouraging anti-democratic developments. The Chinese leaders reaffirm the more symmetrical feature of their regional presence, in contrast with the historical interventionist nature of the United States influence.

Has the U.S. lost its ground for China in Latin America? An empirical assessment

Following this literature review, this section aims to draw an empirically-based image of the current state of Latin America's relations with both the United States and China. The literature on U.S. power in Latin America assumes that military projection is one of its strengths (Ceceña and Rodríguez, 2018), while authors who discuss China's inroads frequently stress its economic nature (Myers and Wise, 2017). This section analyzes those areas in more detail, using trade and arms transfer data as indicators of the U.S. and China's regional influence. We gather data on ten LAC countries, selected by their economic weight in the Central and South American sub-regions.

The increase in Sino-Latin American trade is highly documented: the year 2001, when China became a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), is usually considered a watershed, starting the period in which China became an important trade partner to the region. According to a report published by the World

Economic Forum, trade has grown 26-fold from 2000 to 2020 (Zhang and Prazeres, 2021). It involves the importation of industrialized products by Latin America and the exportation of commodities. According to the Economic Commission on Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), five products comprehend seventy percent of Latin American exports to China: soybeans, copper ore, iron ore, refined copper, and oil (CEPAL, 2018).

However, it is crucial to consider the subregional specificities: while imports from China are comprehensive, South American countries especially export commodities to China and take advantage of trade surpluses (Graphs 1 and 2). On the other spectrum, Mexico's exports are highly concentrated in partnership with the United States, and trade with its northern neighbor encompasses more than sixty percent of Mexico's foreign commerce (The Growth Lab at Harvard University, 2022).

Regarding loans, China's policy banks approach focuses on four South American countries: Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, and Ecuador (Gallagher and Myers, 2019). Dussel-Peters (2021) reports a constant growth in China's regional infrastructure investments since 2005. From 2015 to 2020, most projects were directed towards Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, and Mexico. Initially, those projects were centered on the energy sector, and, since 2015, there has been a concentration on transport (Dussel-Peters, 2021).

These trends show the relevance of South American countries to China. However, the Caribbean and Central America are significant for China in political terms since there are countries in those regions that maintain diplomatic relations with Taiwan (Belize, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, St. Christopher and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and the Grenadines, besides from Paraguay in South America). There are also countries that only recently established diplomatic relations with China, such as Panama (2017), Dominican Republic (2019), and Nicaragua (2021). Moreover, many countries that signed the Belt and Road Initiative Memorandum of Understanding are from Central

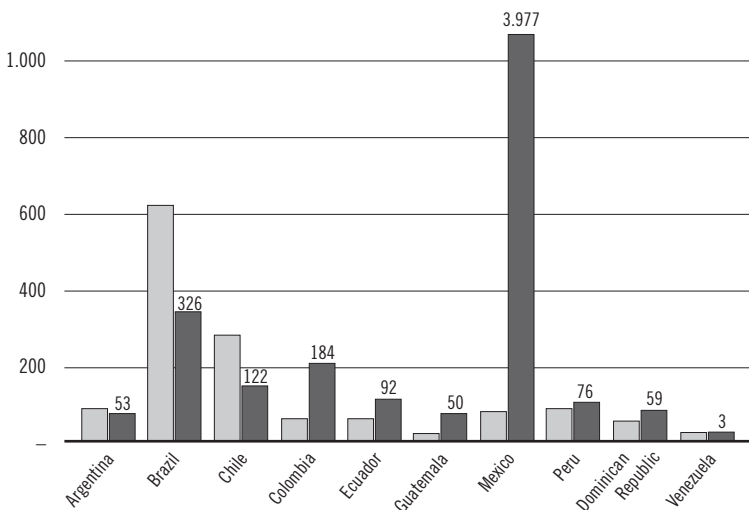
America and the Caribbean¹ – and Panama was the first Latin American country to sign it (Jenkins, 2021). Considering the most significant Latin American economies, Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico, only the first one has signed such an agreement.

The United States has reacted to China's financial presence and role in building infrastructure by launching the programs Growth in the Americas in 2019, creating the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) and then announcing the Build Back Better World (B3W) in June 2021. DFC is a U.S. government agency focused on infrastructure projects in developing countries through partnerships with the private sector. DFC is a way of responding to Chinese advancements in such sectors and is meant to "advance U.S. foreign policy goals" and to promote "alternative for financing compared to state-directed investments by strategic competitors" (U.S. International Development Finance Corporation, 2022, p.2). Its impacts, nevertheless, remain to be seen.

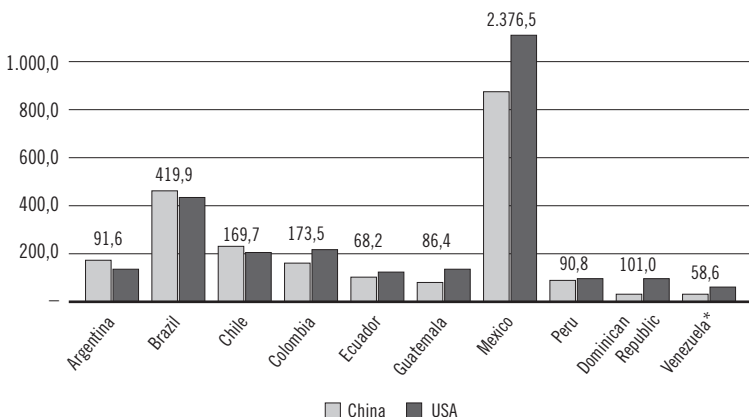
Besides sub-regional specificities, it is consequential to notice that the United States remains the top trade partner for many Latin American countries. Considering examples from all the sub-regions, we notice that from 2009 to 2017, Mexico, Guatemala, Ecuador, Dominican Republic, and Colombia have exported and imported more from the United States than China (Graphs 1 and 2). Mexico is an outlier since its dependence on exports to the United States is only partially affected by its trade with China – moreover, the volume of its foreign trade is higher than the other countries in the region. Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Peru exported more to China than to the United States. However, exports and imports from the United States remain relatively significant even in those countries.

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1 The Latin American countries that signed BRI MOUs are Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Barbados, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Peru, Surinam, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

GRAPH 1 – LAC EXPORTS FOR THE U.S. AND CHINA (2009-2021). AGGREGATED, IN USD BILLIONS.

Source: Comtrade (<https://comtrade.un.org/data/>).

GRAPH 2 – LAC IMPORTS FROM THE U.S. AND CHINA (2009-2021). AGGREGATED, IN USD BILLIONS.

Source: Comtrade (<https://comtrade.un.org/data/>).²

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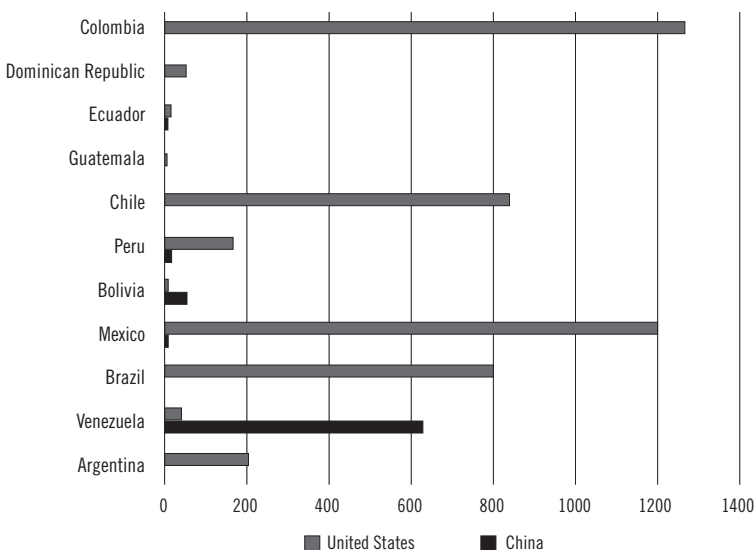
2 There is no available data regarding Venezuela's trade starting from 2017.

Therefore, trade data shows that there is still relevant commerce between the United States and Latin America, since it is still the top trade partner for some countries, and at the same time, a close second for others. China is positioning itself as an important economic partner for the region, but that does not imply that commerce with the United States has no consequence. On the contrary, the hegemonic power continues to be determinant to Latin American states in commercial terms.

Regarding military themes, the United States' influence is even more crucial. An important indicator is arms transfers from both countries to Latin America. The trends in arms sales indicate political alignment and the intention of a long-term partnership since it implies continuous training and maintenance. Considering the three biggest countries in Latin America – Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico – the imports of arms from China are discreet while buying from the United States continues to be quite significant, according to data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). Key to registering countries with deep strategic bounds with the United States, such as Chile and Colombia, did not import major systems of arms from China. In the Brazilian case, there was also no significant import of major weapons from China from 2001 to 2019. Conversely, China's arms transfers were relevant in the cases of Venezuela and Bolivia from 2001 to 2019. These two countries had Foreign Policies critical to the United States and usually are mentioned as concerning situations by U.S. leaders.

It is important to highlight that U.S. military relations with Latin America has a long history, and involves training, officers visits, defense, and security aid, besides the presence of military bases in the Caribbean and informal arrangements for military presence in countries such as Colombia, Ecuador, and Paraguay (Bitar, 2016; Ceceña and Rodríguez, 2018; Milani, 2021; Rouquié, 1984). China's military involvement is discreet and quite incipient, but it is officially registered as an interest at the Latin American Policy

GRAPH 3 – ARMS TRANSFERS FROM THE US AND CHINA TO SELECTED LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES (2001-2019)



Source: Prepared by the authors with data from SIPRI Arms Transfer Database (<https://www.sipri.org/databases/armstransfers>).

Paper (The People's Republic of China, 2016). Some examples of China's security involvement in the region are sending police officers for the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti from 2004 to 2012, institutional visits, and promoting training initiatives for Latin-American officers in China (Ellis, 2020). Therefore, the American presence is longer and structural. China's advances, while important, must be interpreted in perspective.

Considering data in the areas of trade and arms transfers in the China-U.S.-Latin American relations, it is notably the continuity of U.S. regional importance. Even though China became the top trade partner for many countries, commerce with the United States remains important for the entire continent. China's regional engagement is heterogeneous: it is mainly conducted bilaterally, and there are no encompassing patterns in terms of trade since there are

countries that register deficits, while others register surpluses. In the military dimensions, although China is investing in dual-use areas, military sales to the biggest economies in the region – excluding Venezuela – is discreet.

A gap or a trap? The meaning of China's expansion for Latin American development

The academic debate on the impacts of China for Latin American countries is contentious and notably divided into two major positions. One group of scholars argue that China-Latin American relations are different from U.S.-Latin American relations and significant to the quests for autonomy and development since it presents alternatives to partnerships with the United States. They point out the following arguments as aspects of the difference of China-Latin American relations when compared to Western options: i) South-South principles, such as non-involvement in internal affairs and sovereignty; ii) China's alternative development model; and iii) the absence of policy conditionalities when it comes to loans (Nolte, 2013; Vadell, 2019).

Consequently, they assess that China promotes alternatives to the neoliberal paradigm and the Bretton Woods system, resulting in increased possibilities for Latin American autonomy. Such authors argue that improving relations with China will contribute to Latin American countries' development and the building of multipolarity (Harris, 2015; Nolte, 2013; Vadell, 2019). Vadell (2019, p.107) claims that China-Latin American relations "reflect the political and economic principles of South-South cooperation", such as solidarity, mutual benefits, and non-interference. Furthermore, according to him, its different aspects – such as trade, aid, and investments – are conceived in an integrated way to promote development and to the making of multipolar world order. His interpretation suggests

that developing countries behave differently from the Global North and imply that cooperation between the Global South is beneficial in comparison to Western foreign aid. In his words:

[...] the strong bonds established over time between Latin America and the Caribbean, and the PRC evolved from trade cooperation to strategic partnerships and more complex action plans that involve investment and financial cooperation in sectors such as agriculture, energy, manufacturing, infrastructure, technological and scientific innovation, and information. [...] this growing interdependence is not a matter of the imposition of particular Chinese development models on Latin America and the Caribbean countries but one of commercial and financial complementarity in a new stage of capitalist accumulation that places the PRC at the focal point of a global economic power network. (Vadell, 2019, p.119)

In a similar vein, Harris (2015) points out that China's relations with Latin America are part of a process leading to a "more equitable" and multipolar world order and promoting trade diversification. However, in his view, many media and academic assessments of China are permeated by Western biases and different degrees of Sinophobia – apparent in the "dragon metaphor" and on recurrent silences towards the continuing relevant and asymmetric characteristic of U.S.-Latin America and E.U.-Latin America trade. Therefore, even though exports to China are mainly commodities, the same is valid regarding Western states. In other words, for Harris (2015), China's impact is not sufficient to change the content of Latin American trade, but it promotes diversification in terms of buyers and suppliers.

Other studies underline the pragmatic and economic nature of Chinese engagement with Latin America and China's willingness to be discreet and respect Washington's influence (Paz, 2012; Tokatlian, 2008). Wise (2021) points out that Chinese-Latin American economic relations are pragmatic and driven by China's

raw commodities necessities since the Asian country has insufficient resources (Wise, 2021). Accordingly, China has stronger relations with South American commodities producers and the idea of “strategic partnership” upholds an economic meaning. Similarly, Creutzfeldt (2016) argues that China has economic priorities, established by its objectives of national development, its needs for energy and commodities (Creutzfeldt, 2016).

The train of thought developed by this scholarship presents several insights into China–Latin America relations and their contrasts with the Inter-American patterns. It is true, for example, that pragmatism is the foundation over which China and Latin America interact. During the “pink tide”, trade with China was fundamental to improving the balance of payments results, temporarily removing the external strangulation that has historically marked Latin American economies. In some cases, like the Brazilian one, the effects of trade with China were instrumental in accommodating conflicting social interests (Teixeira and Pinto, 2012). Among other factors, the exchange rate policy that enabled an increase in real wages was politically possible due to the compensatory effect of export expansion in a context of an appreciated exchange rate.

The convenience of dealing with China is also stressed in the financial sector, which has historically been a thorny theme in Inter-American relations. In times of elevated economic distress, such as the debt crisis of the 1980s, the financial needs of Latin America served as a source of political advantage for the United States to spread economic policies in line with neoliberal standards (Stallings, 1992) even at an enormous social cost. Thus, it is not surprising that the Chinese willingness to grant loans or carry out currency swaps without demanding any policy conditionality is widely welcomed in the region. The case of Argentina is paradigmatic. Facing a liquidity problem due to capital flights and restricted access to external markets, the government of Argentina signed a Bilateral Swap Agreement with China, disbursing a total of US\$ 11 billion

from July 2014 to September 2015 (Sousa and Daldegan, 2020). These withdrawals allowed the Argentine government to contain the erosion of its international reserves and increased the monetary policy's room for maneuver in managing inflation in an election year.

Several authors present a different perspective. Rather than emphasize the positive effects of the relation with China, they focus on the pernicious consequences of this relationship. They highlight the asymmetrical trade relationship, resulting in new types of dependence (Bernal-Meza, 2020a; Jenkins, 2012; Svampa and Sli-pak, 2015). Moreover, they argue that extractivism – chiefly through mining, oil extraction, and monoculture farming – generates wealth concentration and does not lead to development. It is important to stress that such authors do not intend to analyze China's intentions, but their focus is on the consequences of China's growth for the international political economy.

The notion of asymmetry is highlighted by Bernal-Meza, who recovers Raúl Prebisch's theory of the deterioration of the terms of exchange, and argues that China is becoming a new center, while Latin American countries' international insertion is reproduced as peripheral or semi-peripheral. Bernal-Meza (2020a, p.7) argues that Sino-Latin American relations are marked by a "deterioration in terms of [...] trade and causing a huge challenge to Latin American's development opportunities". Similarly, Jenkins (2012) points out that Latin American exports to China are concentrated in the primary sector and that these are asymmetrical relations since Latin American countries export raw materials and import manufactured products, therefore, dependence structures are reproduced. According to him, economic relations are asymmetric, but China is "far from becoming the dominant economic power in the region that the USA was in the past" (Jenkins, 2012, p.1356).

Moreover, China tends to set the agenda, while Latin America exerts a more passive role. Svampa and Spilak (2015) advance this discussion by analyzing China's expansion as part of the global

hegemonic dispute, which means that China is becoming a new great power. Also, the authors question China's self-definition as a "developing country" and as part of the Global South – for them, China also has a great power foreign policy, as expressed by its presence in the UN Security Council.

While it is clear how the relations with China can give breath to specific autonomist initiatives, their long-term effects on this field and its possible economic development implications are far opaque. Economic development is a contentious topic with scarce consensus in the literature. Still, it is safe to state that the term encompasses a qualitative process of structural change that leads to general increases in productivity and salaries, usually driven by a shift from labor and land-intensive activities to capital-intense ones. In the case of Latin America, overcoming underdevelopment involves profound changes in the land tenure structure and a set of economic policies capable of enabling the sustained accumulation of physical and human capital, in addition to technological innovations. The question, therefore, is to verify to what extent the relationship patterns with China favor, or limit, the achievement of these goals.

Thorough scrutiny of this question is impossible, as it requires the ability to predict the future. However, the available elements allow us to draw a few observations in this regard. First, we must be cautious with claims that relativize the maintenance of traditional trade patterns because of the diversification of buyers and suppliers. Rather than a cosmetic issue, the content of external trade is a crucial feature of development prospects as it reflects and influences the productive structure of the region. The balance-of-payments relief given by the commodities exportations is undoubtedly welcome. Still, it cannot hide that it leads to the reproduction of Latin America's international insertion as an exporter of commodities and an importer of manufacture and technology.

As a branch of the literature points out, China-Latin American relations contribute to the reproduction of center-periphery

dynamics, resulting in new types of dependence (Bernal-Meza, 2020; Jenkins, 2012; Svampa and Slipak, 2015). Trading with China nurtures the pattern of primary-export productive specialization that is at the origin of the peripheral-dependent condition of the region. Those branches of economic activity are not only prone to wealth concentration – in the opposite direction of what is necessary for development, but also increase the political power of traditional land-owning elites that historically benefited from the dependence situation of Latin American economies.

Conclusions

In October 2021, amid a tense electoral race, far-right candidate José Antonio Kast stated that, if elected, he would expel the ambassadors of Venezuela and Cuba from Chile. Asked if he would do the same with the Chinese ambassador, Kast hesitated. Between the anecdotal and the picaresque, Kast's babble expresses with lapidary clarity that China is an unavoidable reality in Latin America today. However, the meanings and ways of dealing with such a state of things are still open to debate in various forms and traditions, both intellectual and political.

This chapter provides a comprehensive picture of the current state of U.S.-China-Latin America relations by putting together the literature debates and empirical data on trade and arms transfers. By doing so, we could contribute to filling a relevant gap in current literature, which tends to paint the Chinese presence in solid colors, either apologetically or as an announcement of an imminent catastrophe. In our account, we see China's relations with Latin America as a fundamental issue of the present and a future still wide open. First, data shows that trade with Beijing accounts for an enormous share of the region's foreign economic relations. Beyond trade, China also has a more substantial presence in the financial sector

due to its lending policy and FDI flows, placing the country in a central position as a foreign currency supplier.

However, data also shows that the U.S. has not declined substantially in trade and, in the arms transfers sector; Washington retains an almost unchallenged position. We believe this is crucial to understanding two aspects of current political dynamics in the region. First, undeniable as it is, China's growth in Latin America has not – yet – displaced the United States. Second, although anti-China positions are politically unfeasible for most of the region, this trend does not seem, so far, to provoke an increase in contestation or assertiveness towards the United States beyond countries such as Venezuela, Cuba, and Nicaragua. Therefore, caution is needed when referring to Chinese inroads in Latin America – they do not represent an end of U.S. hegemony, but a new historical cycle consisting of disputes and rivalry, already explicit on U.S. foreign policy rhetoric.

Following this empirical assessment, we also addressed the tricky issue of the potential effects of economic relations with China on Latin America's economic development. Chinese regional involvement opened important opportunities for Latin American countries and provided the possibility of diversifying buyers, creditors and investors, but trade with China reproduces the pattern of primary-export productive specialization, reaffirming the peripheral position of the region. Instead of viewing China as a villain or savior, we understand trade ties with Beijing as currently reinforcing traditional dependency dynamics. However, we understand that this diagnosis is not the expression of an ineluctable fact, but an observation based on the way local governments have reacted to Chinese expansion. In short, China's growing presence in Latin America is not a gap or a trap by itself. What will come from it may not be entirely manageable, but it is certainly subject to a non-negligible degree of the LAC government's influence. The question that remains is what precisely these governments want from China.

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5.

REGIONALISM, INSTITUTIONAL CRISIS, AND SUBNATIONAL INTEGRATION: (DIS) CONTINUITIES IN A FRAGMENTED SOUTH AMERICA¹

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Introduction

DURING THE FIRST DECADE OF THE 21ST CENTURY, South American governments propelled the creation of different regional institutions aiming, through cooperation and integration, to surpass common problems

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in many areas: health and sanitation, education, trade, democracy, defense and security, infrastructure, energy, and social participation. Besides, since the inauguration of the Summit of South American Presidents in the year 2000, for 14 years,² these countries have been committed to dialog in a common space annually, sharing ideas, objectives and problems through diplomacy.

One of the main institutions created in that period was the Union of the South American Nations (UNASUR), in 2008. Beyond representing an effort towards the union of the subcontinent, as an institution integrated by all the 12 South American states, UNASUR resulted in much advancement for regional cooperation and integration in different areas, especially in the areas of security and defense, health and infrastructure.

With the creation of the South American Defense Council (CDS), UNASUR fostered common efforts and provided to the region a structure to deal with the regional problems without the intervention of extra-regional actors, surpassing the idea of a hemispheric defense that had been promoted through the Organization of the American States (OAS) (Legler, 2013; Serbin, 2009). Since 2008, regional cooperation has been an important mechanism for solving conflicts in South America, such as the conflict between Ecuador and Colombia in the same year, presenting its value as an instrument for managing the regional security order (Teixeira Júnior, 2020).

In the health area, the coordination of norms, procedures and actions for overcoming health bottlenecks and for fighting, jointly, regional epidemics resulted in the creation of the South American Institute for Health Governance (ISAGS, in Portuguese). With the creation of ISAGS took place the fight against unequal access to medicines within the Forums of the World Health Organization (WHO). In addition, ISAGS sponsored the development of



2 The Summit of the South American Presidents has been interrupted since its last meeting, in 2014.

studies, articles and books on sanitary and epidemiological surveillance issues, which were a milestone for the region on providing a space for pressing forward an institution for regional governance on health and sanitary matters (Riggirozzi, 2020).

Lastly, with the creation of the South American Council for Infrastructure and Planning (COSIPLAN), UNASUR provided the maintenance of the efforts propelled since the year 2000 with the creation of the Initiative for the Integration of the Regional Infrastructure of South America (IIRSA). With the continuation of efforts towards developing infrastructure in the region, there was a growing and constant rising of external investment to the South American countries, contributing to the diminishing of the existent asymmetries within the region (Neves, 2019).

However, during the second half of the 2010s the political and economic conditions that pushed forward the above-mentioned initiatives have ended. Because of several national, regional and international changes, the created institutions collapsed, reflecting on a crisis of South American regionalism. The apex of this critical juncture was the withdrawal of more than half of the member states from Unasur in 2019, which not only caused its dismantling, as well as paralyzed, or worse, discontinued the existing joint efforts and projects in motion.

It has become even harder for South American countries facing this critical scenario to comply with their commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), since they were already behind on the run for progressing in different areas such as poverty, hunger, development and much more. With this critical juncture that has been presented to the region, the beforehand existing dialog and cooperation at the Executive level has turned into a very low profile of bilateral meetings and unilateral actions. Thus, we ask if there is any alternative action being taken to foster and to continue the efforts implemented during the last decades.

We argue that some subnational actors' initiatives have taken place, assuming a new role in the regional integration, through what has been called subnational integration, resulting in the continuation of efforts in different areas such as trade and infrastructure at the regional level. In this sense, this chapter aims to discuss how subnational governments – cities, states, provinces, departments – appear for regional dialogue continuity despite the stressed relations and divergences between the South American national governments. Considering that the actions implemented at the subnational level can, in some ways, keep track of the efforts towards complying with the SDGs, we will explore how they act in the region amid a controversial scenario and analyze its limitations.

For that, this chapter is divided into three parts besides this brief introduction and the final considerations. The first section will present in detail the controversial scenario that dictates the political fragmentation of the region, and its impact on the regional institutions and national governments when facing common problems. Subsequently, the second section will discuss the concepts and theoretical contributions about paradiplomacy, subnational governments and subnational integration, in order to, in the third section, highlight the regionalism resilience through the actions and projects fostered by subnational governments, especially the current project of the Bioceanic Corridor between Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile and Paraguay.

A controversial scenario in South America

The new impulse of regionalism in South America during the beginning of the 21st century was characterized by the return of the state as its main actor. Because of the rise of new leftist governments, the regional initiatives created in this period reflected the ideological and political convergence in motion within the

region. As its main drivers were those states that aimed to project their leadership throughout the region, Brazil and Venezuela. Supported by its economic growth in the early 2000s, the governments of Hugo Chávez and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva propelled the creation of the Community of South American Nations (CASA), in 2004, that became the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) in 2008; and the Bolivarian Alliance of the People of America (ALBA), also in 2004.

However, such efforts in creating regional mechanisms for dialogue and cooperation in diverse areas reflected on institutional structures bound to the impulse and support from those countries. Reproducing the institutional logic present in the region since its first attempts of integration, ALBA and UNASUR were limited to its members' expectations and efforts towards the established institutionality, in an intergovernmental dynamic and based on a flexibility that would not limit the countries autonomy on its national decision-making processes. Therefore, such logic represented a low autonomy of the regional mechanisms, being highly vulnerable to periods of changes.

Furthermore, during this period, in contradiction to the idea of bringing closer the countries in South America, the creation of new institutions, in the end, resulted in a more fragmented regional space. The deepening of the fragmentation of the relations in the continent also reflects the low level of shared values between the South American states, highlighting the long-term prioritization of national interests to the detriment of regional institutionality and autonomy. In this sense, the South American regionalism is characterized by different initiatives driven to satisfy the expectations and projects of national actors, thus, establishing an overlap of institutions (Mijares and Nolte, 2018) that constitutes a fragmented scenario formed by different regional geopolitical projects (Mijares and Ramírez, 2020).

Within this discussion, Borbón (2009) points out that the overlap or the oversupply of initiatives for integration has a negative impact in the end, undermining the capacity of action and response of regional institutions. Such a problem is caused by the lack of actual coordination since the efforts are divided and sometimes duplicated, fragmenting incentives in multiple spaces that generate weak institutions. Furthermore, the regional dynamic in South America is run from a centralized decision power on states and, hence, has a low autonomy of decision *per se* (Borbón, 2019).

Based on this highly state centralization for the decision-making process, once the political and ideological convergence within the continent were disrupted, the commitment towards those instruments for dialogue and cooperation were discredited and questioned by the new right and extreme-right wing governments elected in South America since 2016. The first stressing variable in the region marks the Brazilian political crisis that resulted in the impeachment of its former president Dilma Rousseff and the rise in power of its vice president Michel Temer. After that, continuously, South America faced a huge change in the political spectra with the elections of Lenin Moreno in Ecuador in 2017, Ivan Duque in Colombia, Sebastián Piñera in Chile, and Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil in 2018, and lastly, Luis Alberto Lacalle Pou in Uruguay in 2019.

In addition to the new governmental scenario, since 2013, with the death of Hugo Chávez, Venezuela has been facing increasing economic and political crisis that affected the capacity that the Venezuelan state had to support its interests through regional integration – especially since its foreign policy was intertwined with its economic capacity on financially backing up the regional projects from its oil industry.

With this growing critical juncture, many other factors evolved to the crisis of the so-called post-hegemonic regionalism,³ leading to the current controversial scenario of discontinuities. In this sense, it is important to evaluate some of these factors to understand the future possibilities of regionalism in the subcontinent. As discussed by Araujo and Neves (2021), the first critical aspect to be consider is the volatility and instability of South American governments, which, in a regional institutionality based on intergovernmentalism and interpresidentialism (Malamud, 2005), reflects on unstable mechanisms.

During the 2000s, the national incentive and the governmental leadership towards regional initiatives were key components to the boosting of integration in South America, reflecting the existing ideological proximity between those governments (Mijares and Nolte, 2018). However, when the region faces a period of political polarization, the absence of a regional leadership, as it has been seen with Venezuela and Brazil, results in the denial and distrust of the undergoing regional efforts.

That is one of the reasons for focusing on a more autonomous institutionality. When the states within the region face periods of changes or national crises, the instability of these governments implicate on the stressing of the regional projects in motion (Llenderozas, 2016) which affects its capability of giving responses and complying with the expectations of its members (Mariano, Bressan,

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- 3 The post-hegemonic regionalism marks a new period of the rapprochement between South American states during the beginning of the 21st century. The concept, developed by Tussie and Riggirozzi (2012), describes a period in which the state returns as the main actor of the regional initiatives, inserting new areas of discussion and cooperation beyond trade issues. In addition, the term “post-hegemonic” represents the moment of rejection of the United States (U.S.) government proposal of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), in which the new elected governments in the subcontinent questioned the disruptions caused by the U.S. within the region. Thus, focusing on fostering space for the construction of a regional governance exclusively between South American countries.

and Luciano, 2021). Thus, instead of presenting itself as an alternative to help solving the undergoing problems, the regional institutions are paralyzed in such moments, generating this cyclic process of crediting and discrediting the potentiality of regional institutions for discussing and solving common challenges.

The apex of this critical juncture was seen with the dismantling of UNASUR in 2019, when more than half of its members withdrew from the initiative. The stressing of the regional mechanism and its efforts resulted in a scenario of disintegration in which the aforementioned achieved goals and structured institutions were paralyzed or even disappeared. Besides, the dialog and discussions once taken within the existing multilateral forums were, in some ways, replaced by bilateral and unilateral efforts not focused anymore on the region, but directed towards expanding the relationships with extra-regional players.

As discussed by Mariano, Bressan and Luciano (2021, p.1) the current regional scenario can be characterized “by retraction, conservatism and a reduced commitment to regional initiatives”. Understanding it as a changing and a malleable context, the author defines the new regionalism impulse as “Liquid Regionalism”, liquid referring to its flexibility and instability. The dismantling of UNASUR and the creation of the Summit for Progress and Integration of South America (PROSUR, in Spanish) as its substitute, reflects that the new efforts towards the region do not have a clear purpose, driving the region away of the important achievements reached during the last two decades, especially when looking at the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Once again, the dependence on the political will of the governments in power in South America influences the continuity and cohesion of actions taken in the long run. With the newly elected governments, it has been seen a growing lack of alignment among its foreign policies, hence an estrangement between its perception of the region and regional institutions when considering its national

goals. Such breakage results in a low commitment of actors, in which the Executive and diplomatic dialog have changed its preference towards a very low profile of bilateral meetings and unilateral decision-making.

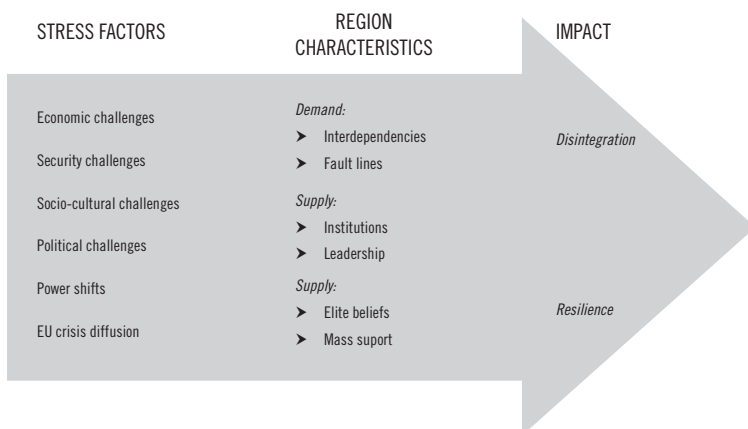
According to Mariano, Bressan, and Luciano (2021, p.6),

Liquid Regionalism leads to a dangerous cyclical dynamic: developing lighter, more flexible and dynamic processes encourages fewer regional commitments, which in turn increases insecurity within integration processes. This instability increases actors' distrust and the perception regarding excessive integration costs (as gains become increasingly remote and less visible). Consequently, this trend favors a growing disinterest and low commitment on the part of political actors, who tend to seek other alternatives to make their interests viable. This will lead actors to defend greater flexibility – understood as a reduction in integrationist ties –, reinforcing the entire cycle.

The current trend has been to prioritize the creation of flexible and informal institutional structures, free of any concerns as to setting up bureaucratic structures in charge of consolidating behaviors and safeguarding memories from which the actors can guide their actions in the short-, medium-, and long-term. At the same time, there is an appreciation of the individualization of the member states expressed in an emphasis on national autonomy, which makes the regional initiatives of this period more mechanisms for consultation than integration.

However, it is important to highlight that, besides the lack of governmental cohesion and the stressing of the efforts and existing regional mechanisms, some of them have presented their resilience through these controversial times. As Nolte and Weiffen (2020, p.7) discuss, regionalism is under stress, but there are some “elements of resilience counterbalancing centrifugal tendencies of disintegration”. Such elements relate to the attributes of the process, its trajectory, its institutionality and the actors and interests supporting it.

IMAGE 1 – THE IMPACT OF STRESS FACTORS ON REGIONALISM



Source: Weiffen (2020, p.29).

Stress factors such as economic, political, socio-cultural and security challenges, as well as the shifting powers within the region “have the potential to either boost or undermine regional cooperation and integration” (Weiffen 2020, p.28). Nevertheless, the impact of these factors is constrained by the ability of a regional organization to cope with stress, or, in other words, with the capacity of each regional mechanism to respond to the new demands and expectations of its actors, as illustrated by Weiffen (2020) in Image 1 above.

Within the characteristics of the regional institution that restrain the impact of the stress factors are: the demands (the structural conditions or constraints), the supply (the role of institutions and agency), and the identity (the sense of community or ideational affinity among political elites) (Weiffen, 2020).

In this sense, besides understanding the critical juncture that has been built up in South America, it is important to pay attention to how each regional institution reacted to such stress, understanding that the trajectory and the peculiarities of the process are the elements behind its resilience. In the case of Unasur we saw the

disruption of its main pillar, the political convergence between the South American governments, in which the heads of state had an important role in propelling the efforts within different areas.

With the diminishing of spaces to dialog and cooperate, there seemed to be no alternative being considered to foster and continue the efforts implemented during the last decades. However, and as argued by Weiffen (2020, p.29), “even in situations of low regionalization and weak regionalism, the belief of key actors in the potential of regionalism as a problem-solving mechanism may stabilize or instigate the creation of new regional cooperation mechanisms in the face of a crisis”. What will be seen throughout this chapter is that the beliefs of key actors are also taken within subnational level initiatives, especially in areas seen as strategic by them, such as infrastructure. So, although we may see a low governmental and diplomatic profile in multilateral forums, the demands and expectations of national actors are fulfilled in alternative ways.

Paradiplomacy and regional integration: a hybrid relation in South America

The internationalization of subnational governments such as cities, states and regions is a historical phenomenon, but its conceptualization represents a novel movement for International Relations. Paradiplomacy appeared in the 1980s as a definition when the specialized literature tried to explain the rising engagement of subnational actors in a new scenario defined by decentralization of the State, globalization, and regionalization. Researchers were focused on North America concerning federalism, which is a self-government system well known for having shared rules between different political levels.

Soldatos (1990) was the first scholar to write about “parallel diplomacy”, but we also have to mention Duchacek (1984) who

investigated the so-called “global micro-diplomacy” some years earlier. In a short period, the debate blossomed creating a myriad of neologisms that place subnational governments as international actors.

There is no final consensus in academia on which term is more convenient for defining subnational governments’ external activities, and researchers usually prefer not to waste their time on terminological debates and prefer to use those concepts that look more convenient for them. Hence, besides the concept of “paradiplomacy”, we can find several different terms that label the region’s performance in the international arena such as “constituent diplomacy”, “regional diplomacy”, “sub-state diplomacy”, “microdiplomacy”, “multi-layered diplomacy”, “catalytic diplomacy”, “protodiplomacy”, “post-diplomacy” and so on. All these terminological creations are usually not clearly and firmly defined, and therefore these neologisms easily shift in their meaning when they are in different contexts. (Kuznetsov, 2015, p.25)

As mentioned above, paradiplomacy has many interpretations and can be applied through distinctive views. Over recent decades, the literature has been developing “management models” and analytical perspectives to show where, when, and how subnational actors should be placed as relevant keys to comprehend international relations. For example, Oddone (2016) highlights five IR theoretical understandings for subnational actors as: i) international actors; ii) participants in foreign policy decision-making; iii) constituent parts of cities networks; iv) constituent parts of governance arrangements; and v) articulators via regional integration. Furthermore, we also can connect paradiplomacy with federalism, governance, transborder relations, development cooperation, public policy internationalization, public consortia, political parties, and legal personality within the scope of Public International Law.

This plurality does not mean taking paradiplomacy for granted. On the contrary, it represents a vast opportunity to develop even

more investigations to legitimize the internationalization of subnational governments as a real and empiric action. The vast majority of paradiplomacy studies encompass case studies of single countries or sub-state units (Schiavon, 2020) and progressively there are more and more macro views that situate this area as a fundamental dimension of contemporary political agenda (Rodrigues, 2021). It is not an overstatement to say that sometimes skepticism exists to what extent subnational governments are actors, influence foreign policies or can be an integral part of international relations. The literature is here to show the other side of the coin and the regional arena is a fundamental support.

Regional Integration is a well-known process of establishing common rules, procedures, and politics for a region (Mattli, 1999). Usually, region is perceived as a geographic aspect that bring three or even more states together, but it can also be seen as a representation of continuous shift of authority on two axes: externally, comprising the supranational aspect, and internally, embracing the subnational level (Rosenau and Czempiel, 2000). Otherwise, it is impossible to explain regional dimension only with this criterion focused on the formation of blocs and, for this reason, regionalism is a fundamental and plural tool because it is a process of policy formulation and implementation, being the region the grounding of this policy (Riggirozzi and Ryan, 2021).

In the 1990s, regional blocs started to be potential arenas for subnational actors' agendas, actions, and initiatives. At that time, the European Union's creation through the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 enhanced subnational voice in the region due to the appearance of the Committee of the Regions (CoR), an organization composed of representatives of regional and local bodies. Although CoR is only consultative, the institution opened space to subnational governments in Europe moving them even closer to the EU main institutions.

As aforementioned in the previous section, if we attest that South America and some of its main regional organizations are facing a tough time when fragmentations and crises seen to be major issues, the EU is also in a critical juncture since the 2010s concerning Brexit, migratory turmoil, far right ascension, and economic downturn. Nevertheless, the EU has at least three singular aspects that also influence the subnational dynamic: supranational arrangements and institutions such as the European Parliament and the European Commission, a truly common market and the establishment of subsidiarity principle that indicate greater autonomy to regions and local governments.

Since the beginning, Duchacek (1984) and Aguirre (1999) started to comprehend paradiplomacy through the regional aspect. Besides global micro-diplomacy, Duchacek discriminated the terms “transborder regional micro-diplomacy” and “transregional micro-diplomacy”. The first one represents transborder formal and informal contacts dominantly conditioned by geographic proximity, whereas the second is a concept used to explain negotiations between subnational governments that are not contiguous (Kuznetsov, 2015), although national governments are. For his part, Aguirre conceptualizes “regional paradiplomacy” as an important dimension of subnational actors referring to transborder activities that encompass cooperative regional regimes.

Those aspects began to get closer concomitantly with the EU, mainly because of the Maastricht Treaty and the CoR. An idea of “Europe of Regions” arose to represent triangular relations between the EU, states, and subnational regions (Christiansen, 1994). Meanwhile, governance debates permeated regional integration and the EU has been the arena to define a new concept, the Multilevel Governance:

[...] a system of continuous negotiation among nested governments at several territorial tiers – supranational, national, regional, and local – as the result of a broad process of institutional creation and decisional reallocation

that has pulled some previously functions of the state up to the supranational level and some down to the local-regional level. (Marks, 1993, p.392)

The interaction between paradiplomacy and regional blocs was evident, but the EU had its own idiosyncrasies. Initial studies and general investigations about the internationalization of subnational governments were situated in universities of the Global North: United States, Canada, and Western Europe, particularly Belgium, Spain, and Germany. There was only a disengagement in the 2000s, when the literature started to incorporate some analysis of the Global South, including Latin America.

Paradiplomacy in South America developed its dynamics in a proper regional context of structural problems which partially covers the controversial scenario formerly examined. The Southern Common Market (Mercosur) – but the same can be said about ALBA and UNASUR – has only intergovernmental institutions and it is not a drawback itself, but the bloc has a state-led dynamic that sometimes thwarts any other activities, including subnational. As stated by the literature, democratic instability, inadequate institutionalization, and low degree of interdependence are main aspects of Latin American regionalism (Malamud and Castro, 2007). However, regional paradiplomacy exists in the region and has its own conceptual dimension too.

As an informative note, there are two institutions in Mercosur representing subnational interests: the Mercosur Cities Network (Mercocities) and the Mercosur Advisory Forum of Municipalities, Federated States, Provinces, and Departments (FCCR), but the first one does not have formal ties with the bloc and the second has become a non-permanent body of Mercosur since 2019, which means that the organization is nearly ineffective. Why does it occur? In addition to other relevant issues, the sum of structural factors with the juncture of (dis)integration can explain the scenario that needed its own explanations.

Beyond other integration processes, the conceptual debate about subnational mobilization in South America has been focused on Mercosur. In the 1990s, Oddone (2012) testified the idea that Mercocities opened a new space where integration could be closer to civil society demands. Hence, “bottom-up integration” appeared as a concept to conceive thinking the region as a dynamic tool between the local governments and the state. Meanwhile, other subnational governments such as Brazilian states and Argentine provinces also started to implement those actions.

For Ventura and Fonseca (2012), for more than twenty years Mercosur has been trying to create institutions to achieve an “integration from within” (or “integration *hacia adentro*”). Mercocities and FCCR were crucial components of this process showing that there were no incompatibilities between subnational aims and national interests. However, Parlasur, Mercosur Social Institute (ISM), Public Policy and Human Rights Institute (IPPDH), Mercosur’s Fund for Structural Convergence (FOCEM), and Social Participation Unit (UPS) are also part of this course that characterized post-hegemonic regionalism specificities.

Then, other terminologies were also incorporated to the debate to dialog about localism (Pereira, 2004) and municipalism (Borja and Castells, 1996), which could be also correlated with the idea of Multi-Level Participation (Allen, 2010), a terminology conceived to illustrate subnational actions without decision-making settlement or influence. In general, conceptual debate on subnational actors was at an initial degree in South America, although it helped to strengthen subnational interests. The main example is the term “subnational integration” representing processes led by subnational actors that are in countries with geographical, cultural, historical, and economic links which overall are members of regional blocs (TIP, 2012).

Nowadays paradiplomacy in South America is facing a possible turning point in a crossroads scenario summarized by three aspects: post-hegemonic regionalism weakness, political instability in many

countries – Peru, Colombia, Venezuela, Chile, Ecuador and so on –, and the Brazilian foreign policy change of direction (Junqueira, Neves, and Souza, 2020). The ups and downs of South American regional paradiplomacy are a fact, but the continent is facing some movements showing that, despite those controversies, subnational actors can foster and maintain many initiatives, including contemporary agendas such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Among other issues and just to illustrate with two examples, in Brazil, cities and states increased their international projection amid COVID-19 outbreak because the central government was denying some World Health Organization's (WHO) guidelines and recommendations. Furthermore, and even with their own limitations due to the lack of national policies, recently the cities Barra do Quaraí (Brazil), Monte Caseros (Argentina) and Bella Unión (Uruguay) created a Tri-national Border Committee to deal with territorial integration (Rückert and Caye, 2020). In the next section, we mention and scrutinize subnational institutions and initiatives that stand out regionally, opening space to enhance the idea of subnational integration.

The subnational efforts for regional integration and the initiatives for developing economic infrastructures

With the critical scenario for regional integration and the dismantling of UNASUR, many of the efforts taken by the South American governments were paralyzed, or even ceased to exist. However, from the main developed initiatives during the 2000s, one remained even during the crisis and the stress of regional and national institutions: the efforts towards developing a regional infrastructure. Seen by the national governmental and non-governmental actors as a strategic and necessary issue, the regional infrastructure development has been in all the political and economic agendas in South America. As an instrument for socio-economic development

and for boosting regional trade and, hence, generating a better positioning of the Latin American economies within the International System, the efforts towards developing an interconnected infrastructure in the region have been resilient through this critical scenario (Neves, 2019).

Although UNASUR was dismantled, until 2018 the activities within the IIRSA – which since 2011 became part of the COSIPLAN in UNASUR – resulted in an increasing value of foreign investments towards the region and in an increasing number of infrastructure projects fully implemented. And, although the IIRSA meetings were paralyzed in 2018 with the collapse of UNASUR, many projects have been continued by its public and private investors, mainly by the efforts of the Interamerican Development Bank (IADB) and the Andean Development Corporation (CAF, now named Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean), and subnational governments (Mariano and Neves, 2022).

Thus, and as discussed in the previous section, the subnational actors in South America have a role at the contemporary political agenda and the regional arena. In a juncture marked by the lack of political convergence and low commitment of the South American governments towards the region, the subnational actors seem to occupy some of the empty regional spaces, continuing, in some areas, the dialogue and cooperation in South America. The scrutiny of this section falls on the 2030 Agenda, more specifically on SDG 9 (“Industry, innovation and infrastructure”) and the issue of economic infrastructure. And the construction of these infrastructures (railways, waterways, roads, ports) is an issue that is interesting to discuss in regional paradiplomacy, insofar as they are subnational units located far from the largest centers of consumption and distribution (Juste and Oddone, 2020).

In the interstate scenario, both Mercosur and UNASUR express the priority for the borders’ issue (Barros and Samurio, 2019; Pessoa and Souza, 2021), but only the first has a body with the

representation of subnational actors, the FCCR. Even so, the last UNASUR meeting on border integration was held in 2017 about the development of a system for accessing information on border crossing regions between countries (Barros and Samurio, 2019). Moreover, there was not any mention of specific measures on infrastructure when discussing the border integration in a Mercosur presidential meeting (Barros and Samurio, 2019), nor the Working Subgroup n.18 “Border Integration” (SGT-18) continued the dialogue with regional financial bodies for border economic development projects (Pessoa and Souza, 2021). In addition, the FCCR ceased to be a permanent body in 2019, due to the low frequency of meetings and thematic proximity to the SGT-18, also affecting the functioning of the Border Integration Working Group (GTIF), linked to the FCCR.

Under this juncture, it is worth looking at South American networks of subnational actors to explore how these governments acted despite difficulties in the interstate scenario. Among the subnational regional initiatives, the Mercocities and the South America Midwest Integrated Zone (ZICOSUR) stand out, bringing together administrative divisions from several South American countries. The first appeared in 1995, initially related to the Mercosur, bringing together cities. The second, on the other hand, originated in 1997, focused on Asia-Pacific and aggregates governments of administrative divisions of scale above the cities, such as states, departments and regions.

Mercocities act to connect municipal public policies with the global plans of the 2030 Agenda and its 17 SDGs. In this sense, it maintains a collection of information on good practices related to the SDGs, the Database of Good Practices of Mercocities (BBPM), enabling visibility to the member cities and cooperation between them, as well as obtaining funds for programs and public policies aimed at of the SDGs (Montero, 2020). However, Mercocities is

more readily associated with the achievement of SDG 11, Sustainable Cities and Communities (Montero, 2020).

This association is in line with the analysis of Mercocities annual reports, at least since 2016. Pursuing the theme of infrastructure, the reports deal with urban infrastructure, its sustainable character and access to finance. Only the excerpts from the Thematic Unit for Strategic Planning and Metropolitan Areas, coordinated by the city of Buenos Aires in the periods 2016–2017 and 2017–2018, dealt with the economic infrastructure. They placed infrastructure and transport as target problems of metropolitan strategic planning for transcending local borders (Mercociudades, 2017; 2018). Outside of the reports, SDG 9 is one of the two objectives without any good practice projects registered in the BBPM.

When dealing with ZICOSUR, the situation changes. It is initially composed of subnational units⁴ lacking infrastructure and with less developed economies in their respective national scenarios (Musso and Banco, 2019), whose subnational governments place similar demands on national governments in terms of infrastructure (Barbarán, 2019). Such demands were articulated in ZICOSUR as it has a specific body to deal with economic infrastructure: the Infrastructure, Logistics and Related Services Commission.

In addition to its Asia-Pacific origin, ZICOSUR also dates to the plans to build bioceanic corridors connecting ports in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans in Chile, Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay and Brazil (Safarov, 2019; Silva et al., 2020), as shown in Images 2 and 3. These economic infrastructure plans manifest themselves in the daily life of achieving the objective of ZICOSUR, when it explains itself as “an instance that is born with the objective of

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4 The subnational units that form the ZICOSUR are Bolivian, Paraguayan and Uruguayan departments, Brazilian states, Argentine provinces and Chilean and Peruvian regions. More information is available on the ZICOSUR official website, at www.zicosur.co.

achieving a competitive international insertion of the region, promoting the development of infrastructure for the articulation of axes of common communication” (Zicosur, 2018a, para. 68). Likewise, the North-Pacific-Atlantic bioceanic corridor is one of the four objectives of ZICOSUR in the area of infrastructure and services (Zicosur, 2019a, p.6) and was highlighted by the same – alongside the Belgrano Cargas railway and ports of Antofagasta – among 218 infrastructure projects that constitute a plan presented at a plenary meeting in 2012 (Zicosur, 2018a).

IMAGE 2 – ZICOSUR AND ITS BIOCEANIC CORRIDORS

ZICOSUR Y LOS CORREDORES BIOCEÁNICOS QUE LA ATRAVIESAN



¿QUÉ SON?

Medios físicos y logísticos, que se consolidan a través del transporte ferroviario, carretero, hidroviario y aeroportuario.



Determinan conexiones integrales entre los estados subnacionales ubicados dentro de Sudamérica y entre los océanos Atlántico y Pacífico.

¿CUÁNTOS HAY DENTRO DE ZICOSUR?

- 1 Corredor Bioceánico Vial Norte/Rodoviario
- 2 Corredor Bioceánico del Eje de Capricornio y su alternativa por hidrovia
- 3 Corredor Bioceánico NOA - Centro (CBNC y su alternativa
- 4 Corredor Bioceánico Central. (CBC)
- 5 Corredor Ferroviario Bioceánico Central (Tren Trasandino Bioceánico) y su alternativa

Source: ZICOSUR (2019b).

IMAGE 3 – ZICOSUR BIOCEANIC CORRIDORS MAP



Source: ZICOSUR (2019c).

Over the period under analysis in this chapter, from 2016 up to 2021, three subnational units coordinated the work of the ZICOSUR commission that discusses economic infrastructure. The Chilean region of Antofagasta was in the *pro tempore* presidency of ZICOSUR in 2016, which allowed it to coordinate that commission. In this position, he promoted the connectivity program “One Project, Five Countries” (from Spanish, *Un Proyecto, Cinco Países*). This program converges to the ports of Antofagasta (Antofagasta and Mejillones) export and import cargo destined for Asia-Pacific markets (Zicosur, 2016a; 2016b).

According to the program, the Argentine river port of Barranqueras is the intersection between the Parana-Paraguay Waterway and the Bioceanic Rail Corridor of the Capricorn Axis of IIRSA, combining modes and directing to the ports of that Chilean region. Thus, the program was based on a stretch of the IIRSA (i.e., approved by the national governments in UNASUR) and that had been prioritized by the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). Antofagasta then sought and obtained approval from the Infrastructure, Logistics and Related Services Commission and the Plenary of Authorities (ZICOSUR’s highest body), as well as support at the first ZICOSUR-Asia-Pacific Business Meeting and the expression of Chinese interest in financing and build (Zicosur, 2016c).

The last update of the program was a workshop at EXPO MEJILLONES 2017. Although the name of the program may not have lasted, the stretches continued in the ZICOSUR discussions as illustrated by Image 3 and other maps published in 2019 on its Twitter profile. In the map in Image 3, the stretches of the program correspond to the route between points 2 and 5 to point 10. In any case, at the 2018 meetings, the regional government of Antofagasta expressed its intention to be “a true logistics platform, designed to be at the service of the economies of the subregions that integrate the ZICOSUR” (Zicosur, 2018c, p.3), “at the disposal of ZICOSUR exporters” (Zicosur, 2018b, p.2).

During 2016, the infrastructure commission showed interest in following the activities of the Quadripartite Commission Working Group created by the Declaration of Asunción on bioceanic corridors – presidential declaration focused on the Bioceanic (or Northern) Road Corridor – as well as supporting two petitions that did not address to the coast of Antofagasta. One was the incorporation of the San Francisco pass – on the border between the Argentine province of Catamarca and the Chilean region of Atacama – into the IIRSA Strategic Plan as an integrated single-head border control. The second was to carry out a bioceanic connectivity study involving ports in southern Peru and a road between Mato Grosso (in Brazil) and Santa Cruz (in Bolivia).

The Argentine province of Salta succeeded Antofagasta in coordination during the institutional restructuring of ZICOSUR in 2017, which defined that the permanent commissions were no longer all coordinated by the same subnational unit that held the presidency *pro tempore*. Thus, the coordination of the Commission for Infrastructure, Logistics and Related Services was entrusted to the Argentine provinces and they chose Salta. Since then, there has been less emphasis on the promotion of specific projects and more on the focus on subsidies, tools, which can strengthen their capacities and demands vis-à-vis national governments.

Thus, in addition to the study of the 2016 meeting, the performance of studies on the competitiveness of the ZICOSUR region by IADB and CAF was reported at the committee meeting in 2017. Similarly, in the wake of the approximation between ZICOSUR and the Southern Development and Integration Council (CODESUL), there was a proposal to carry out studies of connectivity projects to define priorities and submit them to financing by the Regional Development Bank of the Far South (BRDE), linked to CODESUL (Zicosur, 2017).

The commission's coordination worked on other two activities: an interactive logistic map with georeferencing and an action plan,

which evolved into a project data set and a database. The first activity is more recent, because it started in 2018, when the commission agreed to draw up a logistical territorial map of ZICOSUR (Zicosur, 2018b). In 2021, succeeding Salta in coordinating the infrastructure commission, the Argentine province of Córdoba continued the proposal for a logistical map. Thus, it presented an interactive and georeferenced map of the economic infrastructure of Córdoba as a model to expand to ZICOSUR (Zicosur, 2021).

About the other activity, in 2017, the coordination asked members to send written demands about infrastructure to create an action plan to be approved by the plenary of rulers of ZICOSUR subnational units and, with that, jointly promote the demands vis-à-vis the respective national governments (Zicosur, 2017). In 2018, the commission planned to create a project data set listing priorities and quantification of the demand for transport (Zicosur, 2018b). In 2020, the project data set proposal evolved into a database at the committee meeting, as the coordination asked members to fill in a form detailing the existing infrastructure, and designed to assemble the database from the card information (Zicosur, 2020).

These activities organize the circulation of information on the state of ZICOSUR's economic infrastructure. Meetings are opportunities for this circulation to unfold in other formats. As an example, the minutes of the committee meeting in 2018 were an extensive account of problems, proposals, actions and other demands from participants in that meeting (Zicosur 2018b). The map, the project data set and the database structure the demands and information in the form of a diagnosis capable of pointing out strategies for joint action. In addition, ZICOSUR itself recognizes, for example, the possibility of the map to contribute to the definition of joint action strategies in the South America Midwest (Zicosur, 2021).

Finally, joint action strategies, especially before national governments, are built from details that include the conclusion that looking inside the region in various terms is an innovation in regional

integration (Zicosur, 2018b) and that it is based on how infrastructure supports trade and tourism in and out of South America (Zicosur, 2020), as well as the development of these subnational units.

Final considerations

Amid the critical scenario that has arisen in Latin America, with a disrupted governmental convergence and dialog, when asking if there is any alternative action or initiatives being developed to maintain the efforts implemented during the last decades, we could see that the subnational governments appear as key actors for continuity on regional cooperation and integration. Assuming a prominent role in regional integration in the face of the lack thereof on the interstate scale, these actors have been propelling the continuation of efforts in different areas such as trade and infrastructure at the regional level. As we could see in the examples of Mercocities and ZICOSUR, subnational integration is an alternative to the stressed relations and divergences between the South American national governments.

Such role arises from the subnational government's focus on local development and on economic issues in which facilitating trade, especially on border territories, are key topics in their agenda. In this sense, the interest in the continuity of some of the initiatives and projects propelled regionally through those intergovernmental institutions has developed more stability in the subnational arena than in the high politics agenda. This difference results from stress at the interstate level and their difficulties and unwillingness to maintain dialogue despite its political differences. Meanwhile, some local and regional political and economic interests, in addition to being maintained, do not seem to have been contaminated by the aforementioned stress.

By its means, this logic correlates to the extra key feature of the continuity that subnational actors can foster for regional efforts,

which is based on its stakeholders. Many of the infrastructure projects, especially smaller ones, are financed by partnerships between public and private agencies. Thus, the interested parties of such agendas promote, jointly with the political subnational actors, the continuity of such initiatives.

However, these governments – and consequently, subnational integration – have their limitations in the current interstate scenario of disintegration. Subnational governments are aware of their own limitations and needs on infrastructure development, even when this agenda is already incorporated in the national annual plannings, and even though they were already being discussed through multi-lateral spaces and regional institutions, such as IIRSA, UNASUR and Mercosur.

The awareness of its limitations arises when ZICOSUR members articulate to jointly promote the demands vis-à-vis their respective national governments. In this sense, ZICOSUR's focus on tools (maps, databases, etc.) in recent years indicates the purpose of setting up subsidies to demonstrate to third parties the importance of economic infrastructure projects advocated in the joint action strategy of those subnational governments. These tools also make it possible to show routes for new and old extra and intra-regional trade flows. Thus, they serve to increase the capabilities of these subnational units and the conditions for their development.

The scrutiny of subnational regional initiatives also hints at a difference between the intermediate level (corresponding to ZICOSUR members) and the city level (corresponding to Mercocities members) of subnational units. Among the latter, contemporary political agendas like the SDGs and good practices are widely disseminated, but not the issue of connectivity infrastructures for a vast territory. On the other hand, ZICOSUR's documents of the economic infrastructure commission do not emphasize issues of the sustainability agenda, being a matter more properly addressed to the environment commission.

In conclusion, Mercocities and ZICOSUR can be seen as interesting practice examples of subnational integration being maintained during the last decades despite the critical juncture. As positive aspects, those initiatives offer a lively portrait of South American regionalism that goes beyond the States, fostering specific agendas such as knowledge transfer, economy, and infrastructure. On the other hand, it is impossible to disentangle subnational institutions and activities from a fragmented region, which decreases and/or affects their roles. Both examples analyzed here were not created recently, but in the 1990s, revealing that some initiatives reverberate previous processes. They demonstrate that if subnational actors could not bring up innovations in recent decades, at least they are keeping a close eye on South American regional integration, uploading agendas like the SDGs, and holding crucial actions that can renew the idea of subnational integration hereafter.

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6.

THE 2030 AGENDA IN MERCOSUR'S INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL AGENDA: CONSTRAINTS, COMPLEMENTARITIES AND CHALLENGES

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Introduction

THIS CHAPTER INTENDS TO ANALYZE TO WHAT extent the 2030 Agenda of the United Nations and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been incorporated in the internal and external dimensions of the Common Market of the South (Mercosur).

First, we identify the initial proposals of Mercosur bodies to address the 2030 Agenda and the first report released by the bloc's Secretariat on the implementation of SDGs. Then, we develop an analysis of the agendas and documents of Mercosur's organs in order to identify which objectives and goals of the 2030 Agenda are present in the Mercosur agenda. Finally, we analyze the content of the Trade and Sustainable Development chapters present in the main trade agreement negotiated by

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Mercosur countries, i.e., the Association Agreement with the European Union, aiming to understand the impact of inserting SDGs into the actual implementation of Mercosur's trade agreement with third partners. We conclude by revising SDGs aspects of Mercosur's internal and external agendas, in order to compare their main provisions and consequences for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda by countries of the bloc.

The chapter relies on information gathered in Mercosur's online database and in the draft chapters of the EU-Mercosur agreement available at the European Commission's website. The authors freely translated all sections from official documents, from Portuguese and Spanish to English.

The attempt of incorporating the 2030 Agenda in Mercosur's institutional structure

On October 5, 2018, the Pro-Tempore Presidency of Uruguay (PPTU) presented a Diplomatic Note addressed to all National Coordinators of the GMC and to the Mercosur Secretariat, with a proposal to create a new body within the institutional structure related to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. Through a CMC Draft Decision, a new body would be created in Mercosur, denominated the "Meeting of High Authorities Responsible for the Sustainable Development Goals (RARODS)". This proposal was duly addressed at the CX GMC Meeting, celebrated in November 2018, in Montevideo. According to the aforementioned Diplomatic Note:

This proposal comes within the framework of the Mercosur-European Union International Workshop on Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda" celebrated on September 7, 2018, at the Mercosur Building, in the city of Montevideo.

Those present at the meeting, responsible for the SDGs in each State Party, proposed, among their conclusions, the creation of a Mercosur forum, at the level of High Authorities, to deal with issues related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In this sense, I understand that attending to such an initiative would be relevant for Mercosur, which is why I would like to thank the National Coordinators for their due consideration.

Finally, I would like to inform you that the possible creation of the new body will be included as an item on the agenda of the next GMC, scheduled for November 7th and 8th. (GMC, CX Ordinary Meeting. Minute n.04/18. Item 9, 2018)

The Mercosur Secretariat was instructed by the GMC to prepare a technical study on the subject in the following terms:

The GMC instructs the Mercosur Secretariat to carry out a survey on the forums dependent on the institutional structure that have included in their agendas the treatment of issues related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with regard to the social, economic and environmental. (GMC, CX Ordinary Meeting. Minute n.04/18. Item 9, 2018)

In the preamble of the Draft Decision presented by the PPTU for the creation of RARODS, in addition to mentioning the need to build an Action Plan to deal with the complexities inherent to the 2030 Agenda, it highlights Goal 17 "Alliances and Partnerships", as a context to justify the relevance of region integration platforms to articulate and advance towards the SDGs. In terms of institutional hierarchy, RARODS was conceived, as an auxiliary body of the Common Market Council (CMC), which would aim to "propose measures, policies and actions for the treatment of the 2030 Agenda, as well as the exchange of good practices, to advise the CMC on the matter".

It was established that RARODS would propose, in its first semester of creation, a Work Plan with policy proposals and/or

common initiatives within the scope of Mercosur – with actions and implementation deadlines. To this end, it would work in coordination with the other Mercosur bodies whose agendas the SDGs are analyzed. To achieve these objectives, the Draft proposed that RARODS would have the support of the Technical Assistance Sector of the Mercosur Secretariat (SAT/SM).

Finally, an interesting aspect of the draft decision is that it provided for the possibility of participation by Associated States in the new forum.

In the following month – December 16, 2018 –, the L Extraordinary Meeting of the GMC was held, in which the topic of creating the new forum was once again presented.

For this meeting, the Technical Advisory Sector presented the DT SM/SAT n.34/2018 – *The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals in the Institutional Structure of Mercosur: a preliminary approach*. In general terms, a survey was carried out to identify the forums that include the treatment of the SDGs in their agendas exclusively for statistical purposes. In this preliminary approach, it was identified that:

1. 9 of the 17 Goals of the 2030 Agenda are on the agenda of any of the Mercosur forums;
2. 16 forums include initiatives linked to the SDGs in their agendas;
3. there are 11 initiatives of monitoring systems linked to the SDGs;
4. there are also four topics on harmonizing public policies using the SDG indicators as a reference.

At the time of the presentation of the preliminary study, the delegations were informed that, for the final and definitive study, to be presented at the beginning of the new PPT, the research would be expanded to identify all eventual cases in which the SDGs are included from a programmatic-normative perspective to the agendas and work programs of the bodies and forums of the Mercosur institutional structure.

A brief assessment is needed on the role of the technical advisory process provided by the SAT/SM to the discussion process on the proposal to create RARODS. Since its inception, the RARODS proposal had the permanent support of the Mercosur Secretariat, especially the Technical Advisory Sector (SAT/SM). Systematization and compilation methodologies, as well as the expertise of its international officials, were elements that reinforced and confirmed the relevance of the technical profile brought by the SAT/SM the proposal, as well as states the general argument of the importance of a permanent and technical nature of the Mercosur Secretariat for the regional integration process.

At the end of the GMC meeting, the topic was left open, and its discussion was linked to the general review of the current institutional structure:

8. Draft Decision for the Creation of the Meeting of Authorities Responsible for the Sustainable Development Goals (RARODS).

The GMC agreed to address the issue in conjunction with the general review of the current institutional structure with respect to auxiliary bodies and dependent forums. The topic remains on the agenda. (GMC, I Extraordinary Meeting. Minute n.01/18. Item 8, 2018)

In March 2019, the Mercosur Secretariat presented the final survey. However, as the subsequent Pro-Tempore Argentina Presidency (PPTA) had already begun, the priorities and agendas for the semester were redefined. At that time, the Macri Government assumed the PPTA, having as one of its priorities the downsizing/reduction of the institutional structure of Mercosur, which is why it did not carry out the Draft Decision presented by Uruguay and was left aside during its Presidency. The creation of RARODS was never again addressed by Mercosur's institutional decision-making bodies. Nevertheless, the surveys produced by the Mercosur Secretariat

are important products of this process, on which this chapter aims to dialogue within the following section.

The 2030 Agenda and SDGs within Mercosur's institutions

Considering the Mercosur Secretariat innovative survey on the treatment of SDGs by Mercosur's bodies, this section aims to assess how Mercosur decision-making bodies and dependent forums have referred to the overall 2030 Agenda and to specific SDGs from 2015 to 2020. We focus on analyzing the current state of incorporation of the 2030 Agenda by the institutional structure of Mercosur, through the analysis of the agendas and work programs of Mercosur's bodies and forums, identifying which SDGs of the 2030 Agenda have been discussed within Mercosur's internal agenda. In terms of data collection for the analysis, for the 2015-2018 timeframe, the data analyzed originated from the report made by the Mercosur Secretariat in 2019, which identified within Mercosur's official documents references made to SDGs and the 2030 Agenda (Mercosur Secretariat, 2019). Regarding the period between 2019 and 2020, we have directly collected official references to SDGs and Agenda 2030 following the Secretariat's methodology of the referred report, using the database from the Laboratory of New Research Technologies in International Relations database (LANTRI), São Paulo State University (Unesp), Brazil, which have gathered the documentation of Mercosur's online repository over the past years.

Considering the data collected, the tables below show the number of references to SDGs by the two decision-making bodies of Mercosur, the Common Market Council (CMC) and the Common Market Group (GMC) in the periods 2015-2018 and 2019-2020 (Table 1) as well as the number of references to specific SDGs and generic mentions in the same period of analysis (Table 2).

TABLE 1 – REFERENCES TO SDGS BY MERCOSUR'S DECISION-MAKING BODIES

2015-2018	2019-2020	Total	
CMC	30	33	63
GMC	22	24	46
Total	52	57	109

Source: prepared by the authors, based on Mercosur Secretariat (2019).

TABLE 2 – REFERENCES TO SPECIFIC SDGS BY MERCOSUR'S BODIES

2015-2018	2019-2020	Total	
1. No Poverty	3	7	10
2. Zero Hunger	1	3	4
3. Good Health and Wellbeing	4	4	8
4. Quality Education	8	1	9
5. Gender Equality	1	8	9
6. Clean Water and Sanitation	1	0	1
7. Affordable and Clean Energy	0	1	1
8. Decent Work and Economic Growth	4	5	9
9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	0	2	2
10. Reduced Inequalities	5	4	9
11. Sustainable Cities and Communities	1	0	1
12. Responsible Consumption and Production	4	2	6
13. Climate Action	5	1	6
14. Life Below Water	0	0	0
15. Life on Land	2	5	7
16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	0	5	5
17. Partnerships for the Goals	0	3	3
Generic Mention to SDGs	12	21	33

Source: prepared by the authors, based on Mercosur Secretariat (2019).

Regarding the information displayed on Table 1, one must note an increased number of mentions to SDGs over the past two years. While in the first four years of the analysis covered by the report of the Mercosur Secretariat 52 references were identified, our own

assessment of just two years (2019 and 2020) have found 57 mentions to SDGs, which highlights that Mercosur organs have been paying increasing attention to the 2030 Agenda in the past years. Moreover, mentions of SDGs were observed in both Mercosur's decision-making bodies, CMC and GMC, with the most superior organ of the bloc, CMC, mentioning them slightly more frequently (approx. 57.8 percent of mentions).

Some relevant information may be highlighted from Table 2. First, all SDGs – except SDG 12 (Life Below Water) – were at some point mentioned by Mercosur organs over the entire period analyzed, which shows that the bloc has virtually recognized all SDGs in its official documents. Second, the SDGs most referred to were SDGs 1 (No Poverty), 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender Equality), 8 (Decent work and economic growth), and 10 (Reduced Inequalities), mainly associated with social and economic issues. Third, when one contrasts the number of mentions of 2019–2020 with the 2015–2018 period, the tendency of increasing mentions to SDGs was not followed in all SDGs. In fact, only five SDGs (1, 2, 5, 8 and 15) were mentioned more frequently by Mercosur bodies in 2019–2020 than in the previous period of analysis, while six SDGs reduced their number of mentions in the last years, with particular emphasis to SDGs 4 (eight to one mention) and 13 (five to one mention). Nonetheless, some SDGs were mentioned for the first time in 2019–2020 – namely SDGs 7, 9, 16 and 17 – showing that the latest period has been more diverse in terms of coverage of SDGs.

Finally, it must be noted that there is an overall prevalence of generic mentions to SDGs and the 2030 Agenda, which have no clear reference to any specific SDGs by Mercosur bodies in the entire period (around 27 percent of total mentions). On the one hand, this declaratory practice shows to a domestic and international audience that the Mercosur bodies acknowledge the relevance of promoting SDGs, which demonstrates the importance of the “declaratory” or component of these generic mentions:

Making statements is a relatively cost-free exercise in material terms and may be considered a habitual practice of state leaders, thus not meriting further attention. Yet, making speeches is not free of charge. Talk creates expectations domestically and internationally that condition future action and provide benchmarks against which a government's achievements can be measured. (Jenne et al., 2017, p.198)

However, making generic references to the 2030 Agenda also is a way of avoiding any specific expectation on the implementation of concrete regional public policies, which can be seen as a manifestation of a "rhetorical" regionalism, which relates to "engage in symbolic and discursive activities – praising the goals of regionalism, signing cooperation treaties and agreements, and participating in 'summitry regionalism' – while showing no commitment to implementation of the policies they have agreed to" (Söberbaum and Brolin, 2016, p.35).

Table 3 indicates the number of SDGs mentioned by each of Mercosur's decisive and dependent forums. Over the entire period, 24 Mercosur organs have mentioned specific SDGs, 18 bodies in the 2015-2018 period and 13 in the 2019-2020 timeframe. The bodies that have referred to most specific SDGs in the overall period were the CMC (8 SDGs), the Specialized Meeting on Familiar Agriculture – REAF (5 SDGs), and Specialized Meeting on Cooperatives – RECM (5 SDGs).

It is important to note that both CMC and one of its auxiliary bodies, the Political Agreement and Consultation Forum (FCCP), have shown a sudden increase of references to specific SDGs since 2019. While the three CMC documents that mentioned SDGs between 2015 and 2018 only made generic mentions to the 2030 Agenda, since 2019, the CMC (Mercosur's supreme decision-making body) have begun to refer to specific SDGs in its official communications, demonstrating a more targeted and specialized approach towards the 2030 Agenda in the past years.

TABLE 3 – SDGS MENTIONED BY MERCOSUR'S SPECIFIC ORGANS (DECISIVE AND DEPENDENT)

2015-2018	2019-2020	Total	
CCMASM	1	0	1
CMC	0	8	8
COMISIONES RMS	1	0	1
FCCP	0	4	4
GCI	2	2	4
GMC	1	1	1
GTAFM	0	1	1
OMTM	1	0	1
RAADDHH	1	0	1
RAPIM	0	1	1
REAF	1	4	5
RECM	1	4	5
REES	3	0	3
RMAGIR	1	0	1
RMAMM	1	0	1
RMC	1	2	3
RMDAS	3	1	3
RME	1	0	1
RMIS/FEM	1	0	1
RMMA	2	0	2
RMS	1	0	1
RMT	0	1	1
SGT 6	4	1	4
SGT 7	0	3	3

Source: prepared by the authors, based on Mercosur Secretariat (2019).

Medeiros et al. (2019) remind us the importance of the summitry level to Mercosur decision-making and agenda-setting features:

[t]he dynamic of alliances and conflicts between member countries that characterizes Mercosur gives rise to an intergovernmental institutional structure which fosters the specialization of national bureaucracies over supranational ones. Consequently, the group's governance is affected primarily through presidential summitry. The decisions subsequently relayed

to the rest of the bloc by its bureaucracies originate at such meetings. (Medeiros et al., 2019, p.106)

Thus, the fact that the CMC has increased its attention to specific SDGs over time creates strong expectation that the specialized bodies in the bloc may promote concrete regional policies targeting at least some priority SDGs soon.

On the other hand, the FCCP has also become more attentive to the 2030 Agenda from 2019, when the organ referred to SDGs for the first time. In a document titled “SDGs in Mercosur” (March 7, 2019), the FCCP – considering the report issued by the Mercosur Secretariat – emphasized that not all Mercosur forums had so far incorporated the 2030 Agenda into their action plans. Therefore, the body introduced a proposal that all Mercosur bodies should include in their agenda the discussion over SDGs. At the same time, the FCCP presented itself as the Mercosur ideal arena for representatives of national governments responsible for addressing the 2030 Agenda to exchange views and monitor the implementation of SDGs at the regional level. In the opinion of this regional organ:

We believe that discussing these issues within the scope of the FCCP as a region and with its Associates would contribute to projecting Mercosur at a South American level and transforming it into a recognized space for addressing these issues that will strengthen the multilateral system. (Mercosur, 2019, p.7)

SDGs within Mercosur's external agenda: sustainable development issues in the case of EU-Mercosur Association Agreement

While the previous sections have discussed how the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs were incorporated into Mercosur's internal agenda and specialized bodies, this sections aims to identify

and analyze the content of the Trade and Sustainable Development chapters of recent trade agreements negotiated by Mercosur countries – particularly the Association Agreement that Mercosur has been negotiating with the European Union for two decades – in order to be able to address how Mercosur's external agenda have interacted with SDGs and what has been the impact of inserting the 2030 Agenda on the conclusions of trade negotiations with third countries/blocs.

The conclusion of negotiations of the agreement between Mercosur and the European Union was announced in 2019, twenty years after the first proposal. These two blocs bring together 750 million consumers, representing the largest agreement between pre-existing blocs (Salgado and Bressan, 2020). The proposal consists of an innovative instrument, which not only envisages economic development, but must also imply social, labor and environmental advances, in agreement with the SDGs within the framework of Mercosur. The agreement seeks to reinforce, among the countries involved, the fulfillment of various goals of international treaties to which Mercosur countries are signatories, such as the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement.

Therefore, from these treaties, the environmental agenda gained more space in the negotiations of trade agreements. Consequently, the agreement between blocs reinforces this tendency, including the premise that the defense that economic and commercial development should not occur at the expense of the environment (Romeiro, 2012).

In the text of the agreement, SDGs are distributed in eighteen articles of the chapter called "Trade and Sustainable Development", related to the protection of the environment and sustainable development, in addition to protection of work. The first article aims to reinforce the relationship between sustainable development and the trade and investment relations, establishing principles and actions relating to work and the environmental aspects of

sustainable development. In addition, countries have committed to the multilateral agreements signed previously, such as the Agenda 21 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, among others (Trade..., 2019).

Subsequently, article 2 recognizes the autonomy of each member to determine the priorities in the sustainable development policies to be adopted. However, it reinforces that all domestic regulation must be consistent with ratified international pacts. Countries cannot weaken the level of environmental protection due to trade and investment. In conjunction with this understanding, article 3 advocates the rules of transparency in environmental protection measures, reaffirming that the economic, social and environmental dimensions are interdependent and complementary in the dimensions of sustainable development, touching on SDGs 12, 14 and 15 (Trade..., 2019).

In turn, article 4 goes back to SDG 8, when dealing with the compliance of parties to multilateral labor rules, emphasizing the regulations of the International Labor Organization (ILO). The measures that eliminate forced, compulsory, slave and child labor stand out, valuing the dignity of work. The paragraph looks after decent working conditions, including wages and earnings, working hours and other conditions in addition to workers' health (Trade..., 2019).

Therefore, article 5 relates to compliance with multilateral environmental treaties, reinforcing the commitment to effectively promote and implement environmental agreements within the UN (UNEA and UNEP) and the need of the parties to provide information on their respective progress. From articles 6 to 9, the treaty directly addresses the relationship between trade and sustainable development: 06. Trade and Climate Change (SDG 13); 07 Trade and Biodiversity (SDGs 12 and 15); Trade and Sustainable; 08 Management of Forests (SDGs 12 and 15); 09 Trade and Sustainable Management of Fisheries and Aquaculture (SDGs 12 and 14), therefore, accommodating several SDGs in its principles.

Article 10 deals with Scientific and Technical Information, establishing the technical-scientific criterion as a guide for any public policies adopted by the signatory countries. When implementing measures aimed at protecting the environment and issues related to trade and investment, countries must ensure technical evidence from recognized technical and scientific bodies, based on international standards, guidelines or recommendations.

According to article 11, titled “Trade and Responsible Management of Supply Chains”, countries must defend responsible management of supply chains through responsible business conduct and corporate social responsibility practices, based on the international rules of the ILO, the Global Compact of UN and OECD. This content covers SDGs 11 and 12, and may collaborate with SDG 10. In article 12, SDG 8 is incorporated again, reaffirming the commitment to the 2008 ILO declaration on Social Justice, including the minimum wage, protection inclusive social, health and safety at work and other aspects related to working conditions.

From articles 13 to 18, the parties reaffirm their commitment to work together to achieve the objectives of this chapter, acting based on SDG 17. Article 15 establishes general guidelines for resolving disputes, making efforts through dialogue, consultation and exchange of information, and cooperation to resolve any disagreement over the interpretation or application of this agreement. Accordingly, article 16 sets out rules for countries to reach a satisfactory resolution to the dispute in question. Article 17 provides for the composition of a technical panel of experts for the settlement of disputes, as well as for the bureaucratic forms and procedures for the performance of this panel.

Evidently, the chapter reaffirms the importance of multilateral commitments related to the environment, climate change, protection of biodiversity and sustainable management of natural resources (Trade..., 2019). Complementarily, the chapter also covers the rights of workers and socio-economic practices in harmony with human

rights principles. In fact, several principles are mentioned, such as the principle of human dignity and the principle of non-retroactivity of socio-environmental laws, among others. It also seeks to place the protection of nature, work and man in an integrated way, conditioning countries to seek sustainable development that harmonizes the social, economic and environmental dimensions.

The agreement also reaffirms fundamental principles, such as the prohibiting of social retrogression, which prevents the repeal of environmental and labor laws by member countries. That is, the parties are prohibited from increasing their competitiveness to the detriment of the environment or from the suppression of social rights (Salgado and Bressan, 2020). The specific chapter on sustainable development reinforces the trend towards strengthening environmental preservation measures in European agreements, such as the one established with South Korea in 2011.

The international treaties are reaffirmed in the agreement, aiming to guarantee the commitment to the obligations and regulations assumed by the countries involved in the multilateral scope. In turn, the European Union determines the most relevant points in its trade relations with its counterparts, also envisioning the European Green New Deal, which consists of making the European Union more sustainable. This pact also aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, in addition to applying new technologies, to transform the European continent with a neutral climate impact. To this end, “ecological diplomacy” is sought in the treaties signed by the bloc, adopting environmental principles within the scope of trade relations. In this case, the agreement prioritizes the mandatory implementation of the goals of the Paris Agreement and the SDGs.

However, in practice, the agreement has faced serious difficulties to be implemented. The dismantling of socio-environmental institutions by the Brazilian government of Jair Bolsonaro, added to the worsening of deforestation and the destruction of Brazilian biomes, directly led to the stagnation of negotiations on the agreement signed

in principle between Mercosur and the European Union. The ratification of the agreement faces a lot of resistance from the European Parliament and European national parliaments, especially from the green parties. There are serious disagreements from European countries that criticize the policy of Brazilian environmental destruction, directly preventing the implementation of the association agreement.

The agreement was unlikely to be approved by Europeans while Bolsonaro presided over Brazil. However, even under Lula's government the agreement has yet to be signed. In 2021, when this article was elaborated, according to the opinion poll commissioned by the organization Rainforest Foundation Norway and conducted by the company YouGov, around 75 percent of respondents in twelve European countries are in favor of stopping the trade agreement "at least until deforestation in the Amazon is minimized, even if this reduces European exports to South American countries" (Rainforest Foundation Norway, 2021).

On the other hand, there is the argument that the trade agreement can serve as a catalyst to expand the political and regulatory framework for the implementation of environmental regimes and extraterritorial obligations, including the SDGs (Nolte, 2020). According to Nolte (2020), with the implementation of agreement, it would be possible to strengthen and institutionalize both circular environmental processes – ensuring nature's ability to renew its resources – and the transformation of sectoral economic structures to zero carbon models, for example, the automotive sector or the mining-energy sector. Based on this analysis, it would be easier to protect the Amazon Forest if Brazil and the other Mercosur countries were part of an agreement that includes a commitment to implement the measures of the Paris Agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In this sense, the agreement would strengthen the deepening and development of environmental protection networks between South America and Europe, consisting of one more gear to achieve the SDGs.

Finally, in a comparative perspective, the SDGs identified in the EU-Mercosur agreement were SDGs 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 17. Meanwhile, within the bloc's internal agenda we have identified all the SDGs, except for SDG 12, which demonstrate that Mercosur has discussed SDGs more thoroughly within its internal bodies than in the negotiations with the EU. Another interesting aspect to compare is that the most mentioned SDGs in the internal agenda of Mercosur were SDGs 1 (No Poverty), 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender Equality), 8 (Decent Work And Economic Growth) and 10 (Reduced Inequalities). This means that the bloc's internal agenda is more concerned with the "social" SDGs, while the EU-Mercosur agreement makes greater mention of the "environmental" SDGs, even though a common focus is given to SDGs 8 and 10, which contain both social and economic elements.

Conclusion

This chapter intends to analyze to what extent the 2030 Agenda of the United Nations and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been incorporated in the internal and external dimensions of the Mercosur. To develop this analysis, the chapter was structured into three sections.

The first section identified the initial proposal of Mercosur bodies to address the 2030 Agenda, grounded in the 2018 Uruguayan initiative to create a High Level Meeting responsible for the Sustainable Development Goals (RARODS) as well as the first report released by the bloc's Secretariat on the regional implementation of SDGs. As it was pointed out during the first section, the frustrated process of creating the RARODS reveals a great deal about Mercosur. For instance, it has shown the volatility of national interests at the moment of defining the priorities of Mercosur's Pro-Temporary Presidencies, and also the lack of continuity when dealing with

substantive debates on regional integration such as monitoring and implementing SDGs.

Nevertheless, it was pointed out during section 1 that, since its inception, the RARODS proposal had the permanent support of the Mercosur Secretariat and, despite the creation of RARODS was never again addressed by Mercosur's institutional decision-making bodies, the surveys produced by the Secretariat became important products of this process. These reports contributed to further proposals related to SDGs monitoring presented by other organs of Mercosur, such as the FCCP, and it has also been referenced by academic research, such as the present chapter.

In this sense, the second section of the chapter identified the several documents from the bodies and forums of Mercosur that refer to the Agenda 2030 and SDGs. Updating the data from the Mercosur's Secretariat Report of 2018 with documents from 2019 and 2020, we have identified that Mercosur organs have been paying increasing attention to the 2030 Agenda in the past years. In addition, all SDGs – with the only exception of SDG 12 (Life Below Water) – were mentioned by Mercosur organs over the last years, demonstrating that the bloc has fully considered all SDGs in its internal agenda. SDGs 1 (No Poverty), 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender Equality), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and 10 (Reduced Inequalities) were the most referred by Mercosur bodies. What is more, the bodies most active in referring to SDGs were the CMC (8 SDGs), the Specialized Meeting on Familiar Agriculture – REAF (5 SDGs), and Specialized Meeting on Cooperatives – RECM (5 SDGs).

On the external front, section 4 of the chapter argued that the association agreement between Mercosur and the EU is also an important instrument for environmental preservation and the promotion of SDGs, considering its three dimensions of sustainability: economic, social and environmental. Notably, sustainable development is one of the pillars of this inter-regional trade agreement. The

agreement proposes the incorporation of the SDGs in addressing trade and sustainable development, establishing relevant measures for environmental preservation among member countries. However, the ratification of the agreement between blocs faces resistance even after the destruction policies generated by Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro. The European Parliament, as well as European national parliaments, are against Brazilian current environmental policies. European leaders demand the control of deforestation in the Amazon Forest, as well as the reconstitution of governance bodies, deconstructed in the policies of dismantling Bolsonaro's environmental framework. In practice, although several SDGs have been inserted in the agreement negotiation by Mercosur and the EU, it is precisely the concern with implementing SDGs – especially the environmental ones – that has presented the ratification of this trade agreement, which would become the major external agreement in the historical of Mercosur.

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7.

THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION IN MERCOSUR



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Introduction

THROUGHOUT THE HISTORY OF THE INTERNATIONAL System, there have been many attempts to collectively create solutions or agendas on significant issues, such as nuclear weapons technology. After the Cold War, these issues became more diverse, so topics such as the environment gained strength in international relations. In the 21st century, it has become a common topic in international organizations discussions, especially at the United Nations (UN), how to build a common ground between development and environment preservation. At the same time, policymakers disagree about the issue's relevance or reject it as a necessity for your future.



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Besides these devious paths, the environment had been a major issue on the UN agenda. The Millennium Development Goals (MDG), launched in 2000, were eight objectives realized as the main problems for the international community. Environmental sustainability is addressed as Goal 7, alongside fighting against HIV/AIDS and poverty reduction. The idea was to conquer these goals by 2015, but this reality did not happen. In 2012, during the Rio+20 conference, these goals started to be remodeled. It assembled civil societies, political authorities, and private actors to the debate. Furthermore, nature preservation became a cross-cutting matter in the goals. Therefore, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were released in 2015 at the UN General Assembly.

These new goals target economic and social topics in a broader approach, describing how to achieve those goals. Even so, the SDGs became an important platform for critical problems for the Global South countries, such as food security, social inequality, and environment. The goals have been receiving many critics on the presence of private investments on basic rights, turning it into services. Hence, the SDGs might be inducing States to adopt neoliberal policies and reforms.

Therefore, our central point is to understand the impact of the SDGs in the Mercosur institutional organization, once those goals became part of the bloc's cooperation mechanisms, especially the South-South Cooperation (SSC) institutional practices. On that account, this chapter will explore the topic in three parts. Firstly, comprehend the SDGs and how their goals are being applied at the International Cooperation Agenda; secondly, the SSC definition and in what manner it was embodied by Mercosur; and finally, we analyze the relationship of the SDGs and the SSC practices of the bloc, pointing out if how those ideas get by in South American international politics.

Sustainable Development Goals and international cooperation agenda

Over the years, International Development Cooperation (IDC) has been characterized in different ways, varying according to the historical moment and the international situation of cooperation projects. In other words, the post-colonial dynamics, the North-South conflict, influence the formation of the IDC, as well as the East-West conflict explains the formation of the international cooperation system. Ayllón (2007) understands the IDC as the set of actions carried out by governments and their bodies and civil society entities aimed at improving living conditions and reducing vulnerabilities in other territories. Thus, the IDC modalities can be specified by three elements: actors, flows, and actions, which allow the systematization of different actions and projects.

The main projects and actions of the IDC developed after the Second World War were vertical and asymmetrical forms, which differentiate the donor and the recipient in the cooperation relationship. These characteristics are implications of the North-South Cooperation (NSC) concept, which starts from the premise of aid and the understanding of the difference in power of the cooperating parties. In contrast, in the 1970s, the political pillars of parity and horizontality emerged from Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC).

The UN Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA) pointed out several characteristics of the TCDC, which helped to build a new paradigm for the IDC based on the interests of the countries receiving cooperation. Those features aimed for greater autonomy and participation in IC projects, going from a tied relationship to a free relationship. The BAPA and the promotion of TCDC was an important milestone for the Global South discussions on the international order. The TCDC and the NSC were not constituted as opposing

models. However, complementary as the emergence of the new paradigm did not aim to replace the previous model.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the opposition to the ICD paradigms strengthened for many reasons: the economic growth of countries in the Global South and the strengthening of global and regional debates on political and economic inequalities. In this context, the South-South Cooperation (SSC) became a political tool to question the current paradigm of IC models, which has always been present in the spaces of debate. Notwithstanding, its definition is a reason for substantial discussions in academic and political circles. In general, SSC has been defined as the sharing of experiences based on solidarity, horizontality, and mutual benefits. The characteristics of CSS advance on the principles of TCDC, such as horizontality, consensus, and equity, among others.

In this context, the two major United Nations (UN) agendas for the ICD have created the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and its replacement, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).¹ This current development approach by the UN raised the SSC within its format. Moreover, it emphasized several agendas to overcome poverty and hunger developed in the South. The SDGs advance the issues of their predecessor by building a universal proposal of objectives and goals for the construction of sustainable and globalized development.

The 2030 Agenda, in this way, would create a new form of relationship between donors and recipients, as well as public and private partnerships for the construction of policies aligned with the objectives. In addition, in theory, there is a greater focus on issues such as transparency and accountability between cooperating parties, as well as States and civil society.



1 The SDGs are also known as the 2030 UN Agenda.

Several documents from the UN system agencies point to the SSC as a central axis of the SDGs, structuring for the definition and construction of this agenda. However, it comes up against the contradiction of being an agenda from the North to the South, with funding dependent on central countries and intangible objectives for a large part of the Global South. The SDGs became the guide for the development of public policies, reverberating in several political goals of Global South's countries and of regional organizations – such as Mercosur.

Heloise Weber (2017) corroborates with this idea; the author points out that the 2030 Agenda is based on neoliberal ideological values. She understands that the SDGs address the Global South countries committing to leave no one behind in the development path. However, the suggested economic and political reforms place the State aside and leave room for the action of international private actors on basic rights, such as sanitation. Furthermore, Emma Mawdsley (2018) presents that the presence of the private actors can contribute to problems that go beyond hegemonic neoliberalism. They increase social injustice and economic inequalities.

The BAPA+40 Conference, or Second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, held in 2019 reinforces several aspects presented in the first conference, while seeking to introduce the sustainable development agenda into the centrality of the SCC. The conference resolution (UN, 2019) presents important recognition of the actions developed by the countries of the Global South, and the efforts to change the paradigms of the ICD. However, it remained static regarding financing issues, without addressing any specific policy beyond the “commend developed countries for their support, to South-South cooperation and engagement in triangular cooperation and encourage them to further scale it up” (UN, 2019, p.11).

In this sense, Stephen McCloskey (2019, p.156) argues that the SDGs goals fails to be “fatally hitched to the same tried and failed

economic system that created climate change, global inequality and social polarization in the first place". In his argument, the author understands that there is a need for sectors engaged in cooperation actions to be engaged with the poverty structural causes and to leave the comfort zone of assistance policies.

That is, the SDGs do not "overcome the depoliticization of aid discourses and policies as they still frame development problems as technical, managerial and measurable problems" (Belda-Miguel et al., 2019, p.2). Weber (2017, p.11) argues that the "SDGs as a framework for global development integrates (comprehensively), what has been evolving as a neo-liberal development project at least since the 1980s".

The arguments about the importance of rethinking the paradigms of the SSC agenda and the entire international development agenda are reinforced with data on global inequality. After half the period to reach the SDGs and their targets, we see a profound growth in the concentration of wealth in the world, Oxfam (2022) reporting data shows off that during the COVID-19 pandemic the incomes of 99 percent of humanity worse off while the top 10 richest men doubled their wealth. The report also presents that since 1995, the top 1 percent have captured nearly 20 times more of global wealth than the bottom 50 percent of humanity (Oxfam, 2022).

Weber (2017) points out that the role of the 2030 Agenda is not to break with the neoliberal order, but to guarantee the mitigation of risks for private investors considered as "providers of development". The construction and implementation of the SDGs are swamped by a series of these neoliberal conceptions of development, economic growth, poverty, and inequality. Concepts and policies that result in enrichment of transnational companies that operate globally, which generates consumer goods and services demanded by large businessmen (Hidalgo-Capitán et al., 2019).

The construction of anti-hegemonic development and international cooperation agendas do not find resonance in the agenda

presented by the SDGs. Experiences such as the World Social Forum (WSF) which promoted important and relevant debates on the construction of alternative models of development, construction of public policies, social participation, and democratization of the State, guided by the motto “another world is possible”, were disregarded in the construction of sustainable development agendas, while some of their policies were co-opted by the hegemonic institutions of neoliberalism.

Once disruptive and a flagship of debates at the WSF, “participatory budgeting” has been reconstructed and co-opted into World Bank best practice guides. However, such incorporation into the best practice guides of international agencies did not bring the pillars of these experiences to the center of the debate, civil society remains marginalized in the construction of the great agendas or with its participation mediated by NGOs financed by large foundations that are agenda setters in these discussions.

Other forms of governance and, consequently, other conceptions of development are not part of the agenda and, consequently, influence the very conception of SSC, which starts to incorporate the hegemonic forms of cooperation and loses what was once called the Spirit of Bandung.

It is important that colonial perspectives have an accent in global debates, such as some Latin American theories of deconstruction of hegemonic notions of development, economic growth, and sustainability. Buen Vivir’s proposal (Good Living) is an example of a way to reconnect with harmony with Nature, reciprocity, relationality, complementarity and solidarity between individuals and communities, with its opposition to the concept of perpetual accumulation (Acosta, 2016).

In this epistemological context, some scholars present a counter-hegemonic proposal of Good Living Goals, as an alternative proposal to SDGs. This agenda would be centered on: biocentric sustainability or harmony with all beings in nature; social equity or

harmony with all human beings; and personal satisfaction or harmony with oneself (Hidalgo-Capitán et al., 2019). These proposals and conceptions are sustained from the opposition with the hegemonic neoliberal political values and concepts, starting from a conception that this economic system

operates through multiple devices that alter the economy, ecology, culture, institutions, and even consciences, since it converts civic obligations into moral burdens, interrupts commitments for social ties and collective construction, since it teaches that the effort is always individual; it modifies the respect for compliance with the rules, paying for the search for success at any price; it disregards the care for the place of the public, which is permanently replaced and subjugated by the private and is detached from respect for universal and effective human rights. (Madoery, 2018, p.25)²

The Latin American decolonial thought emerges within a broad context of contestation of the traditional forms of development coming from the global North. From structuralisms to Dependency Theories, critical thinking in the region promoted and presented development proposals from the region or anti-developmental proposals, close to European constructions, Latin critical thinking has always started from constructions since the South.

These traditions affect the construction of SSC projects, as well as being impacted by the incapacities and economic weaknesses arising from the financial dependence of the central powers. Latin

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- 2 From the original: “opera a través de múltiples dispositivos que alteran la economía, la ecología, la cultura, las instituciones e incluso las conciencias, ya que convierte obligaciones ciudadanas en cargas morales, interrumpe los compromisos por los lazos sociales y la construcción colectiva, ya que enseña que el esfuerzo siempre es individual; modifica el respeto por el cumplimiento de las normas, abonando la búsqueda del éxito a cualquier precio; se desentiende del cuidado por el lugar de lo público, que es reemplazado y avasallado permanentemente por lo privado y se desliga del respeto por los derechos humanos universales y efectivos”.

American regionalisms are strongly marked in the 20th century by the influences of global economic trends, from the first wave more guided by ECLAC's neo-developmentalism, to the neoliberal waves and the recent more autonomous construction models that emerged in this century. In the next session, we will delve deeper into the dynamics of SSC and regional integration, and then on Mercosur's case.

SSC and regional integration

In the last years, the SSC secured its place in the International Relations research, mainly for relevance gained in the current international politics. This scenario took place as some Global South actors became evident at the beginning of the 20th century, along with changes in the Global North capacities. Notwithstanding, the SSC is not something new, since it dates to the 1950s. This kind of international cooperation arose while many Asian and African countries were struggling for their independence, building their States and development model. The Bandung Conference (1955) was where the SSC started to take form. It not only started an alternative movement toward systemic bipolarity, but it also was a setting to debate autonomous development models.

The SSC emerges from this context, an International Development Cooperation (IDC) mechanism based on the exchange of technical expertise. Thus, the SSCs goal was to confront structural issues from the colonial period. Therefore, the SSC centered on solidarity, horizontality and mutual benefits between the actors involved. The Global South countries understood this type of cooperation as an alternative to the aid propositions from the Global North. Alden, Morphet and Viera (2010) affirmed that these South-South issues were coordinated in the multilateral organizations, mostly in the United Nations, throughout the Cold War.

The newly independent countries, such as India, Egypt, and Yugoslavia, started to articulate some concerns on development after the Bandung Conference. Alden, Morphet, and Vieira (2010) highlight that these countries did not have the hard power capabilities to make themselves heard. Therefore, they had to use alternative approaches. In the multilateral organizations, they articulated to form pressure groups such as the G77, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). These countries were aiming to act against economic, political, and trade inequalities, pointing out the privileges of the Global North powers.

These groups focused their attention to change the normative structures, using votes of the many developing countries. It was during the United Nations Conference on Technical Cooperation between Developing Countries (1978) that the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA) defined South-South Cooperation. Inspired by Bandung, the BAPA described the SSC to reach development. The SSC should base on solidarity, horizontality, interdependency, and sovereignty defense. It would center on the exchange of technical experiences that could be applied in countries with similar concerns.

Throughout the Cold War, the SSC engagement was restricted between States of reduced impact foreign policies at the international system (Milani and Duarte, 2015). In this scenario, normative agenda, and lack of influence in international politics, the SSC had as main political goals: the fight against imperialism, defense of a Westphalian severing concept, and greater relevance in international relations. Moreover, they pursued a path to economic growth and reducing poverty without an automatic alignment with the U.S. or U.S.S.R. (Alden et al., 2010; Mawdsley, 2012). Regardless of whether it was a bilateral or multilateral set, in the Cold War the SSC had a very strong autonomous feature, its importance was economic and political.

The crisis of the Keynesian development model, based on the State as an active economic player, directly affected the SSC's existing arrangements. In the 1980s and 1990s, the Neoliberalism advancement and the end of the Cold War changed the dynamics of international relations. For that reason, the Global South had to adapt to this new scenario in the international system without losing focus on development and keeping their sovereignty. The SSC initiatives lost capacity, development models, and practices, based on neoliberal values, paths took place.

Because of the weakening of the SSC, other paths to development were designed by the Global South countries. Regional integration was a path chosen by many actors as a mechanism to resist the neoliberal reforms imposed by the Global North powers. South America's Southern Cone countries (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay) followed this process forming the Mercosur. The bloc established on the open regionalism concept, which aims at financial and trade issues. The process that originated the Mercosur did not start in the 1990s, it started in the developmental ideas of the 1970s (Paikin, 2019). Even though the bloc changed focus, it also conducts international cooperation initiatives.

The reforms inspired by the Washington Consensus did not bring the expected results. In other words, the domestic markets opening to foreign investors and the State's withdrawal as a central economic actor gave disappointing results. Especially in developing States. The Latin-American economic stagnation, the crises in Southwestern Asia, and the crash of the Russian stocks market revealed that Neoliberalism and globalization affected the Global South countries in a truculent way. The neoliberal reforms and globalization produced economic and social asymmetries in the Global South States. Therefore, those actors had to review their development strategies. In this framework, the SSC comes back to international politics, as a tool to achieve economic and social development. Even though this reintroduction of the SSC has a few differences

compared to the Cold War context, new actors and mechanisms were included.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the SSC's reemergence as a relevant international cooperation mechanism related to some facts. The Chinese growth, stimulating the economies of many commodities exporting countries, such as the ones in Latin America; the ongoing political and economic inequality between Global South and North, in which the developing countries had minor roles in the international organizations and more difficult to access financial support; and the political-economic stabilization in regional powers such as Brazil, India and South Africa couple up with active foreign policies agendas. Those facts created favorable soil for the establishment of a new IDC between the Global South States (Mawdsley, 2012; Tickner et al., 2017).

These countries went through changes as international actors during the last decade. They made it evoking principles and goals from the Bandung Conference (this inspiration from the conference is known as the Bandung Spirit). Via their foreign policies, they brought the SSC back to the core of international politics. The SSC became a foreign policy tool for those emerging countries. They were pursuing to diversify their partnerships and influence (Ramazini et al., 2015).

These goals were explored through new agreements in international organizations, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO). Additionally, multilateral forums were created; they would assist the political coordination between the States, aligning interests. Conferences like the IBSA (India, Brazil, and South Africa) in 2003 and the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) in 2009, which became the BRICS in 2011 following the inclusion of South Africa. Moreover, multilateral forums such as the G20 also took place, gathering Global South and North. Thus, these countries created frameworks, many without the presence of the Global North powers, to strengthen their ties. It is worth mentioning that these

emerging countries already had their ICD agendas, but in the last years that they had a South-South turn.

The new assembly setting and the economic growth, pulled by the commodities boom, reflect the increase of the emerging countries' influence, especially the BRICS countries. In 2008, the financial crises in the Global North escalated this process; it reduced the international investment of those countries, because of the solution to domestic economic needs. Notwithstanding, the development rates of the emerging countries guarantee them the capacity to raise their participation in IDC, occupying the space. In this setting in the international economy, the emerging countries enhanced their SSC partnerships. The prosperous development models; successful social technology in the fight against poverty, hunger, and economic inequality; and low-cost technology production made the BRICS countries role models and attractive partners for the Global South (Mawdsley, 2012). In the last ten years, the SSC was not limited to the normative agenda inside the multilateral organizations, it became a reliable tool in the pursuit of development. Working as alternatives to the hegemonic institutions like the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

However, in 2015 this setting started to change. The Global North economic recovery, the downfall of the commodities prices, a decline in the Chinese economic growth level, and the extenuation of the multilateral organization, led by President Donald Trump (2016-2020), were systemic features that directly affected the capabilities of the emerging power. In the Brazilian case, this set after the political right turn during Jair Bolsonaro's administration (2019-2022), SSC partnerships are not seen as an important theme in the Brazilian foreign policy agenda (Moraes De Sá e Silva, 2021). In the last years, studies about this reemergence of SSC have had a more critical view of it. Emma Mawdsley (2019) explains that the Global North countries have been enforcing SSC features on their aid mechanisms. Even though, most of the time these features are

limited to the speech rhetoric or leave South-South political values aside. Heloise Weber (2017) validates Mawdsley's point. The author explains that the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which share SSC values and goals like solidarity and horizontality, reinforce neoliberal ideas in their goals.

Therefore, the SSC is a cooperation mechanism that can be designed involving different actors and agendas. The Mercosur, as mentioned above, brought in its formation the ideal of cooperation. The institutional apparatus on IDC is based on SSC features. In its first years, the Mercosur focus was to insert the region into the international trade and financial arenas in a competitive condition. Moreover, at the same time, assert the bloc's institutional legitimacy in the international system. Moreover, the bloc's cooperation agenda prioritized arrangements in a North-South axis, often with the European Union (EU) (Paikin, 2019). At the beginning of the 21st century, the arrival of left or center-left administration influenced regional governance. The "Pink Wave" brought a multiple regional agenda, debating social and political issues from a regional perspective.

The establishment of administrations critical to the neoliberal reforms from the 1990s delivered new ways to understand the development and the regional governance. The *open regionalism* loses strength. On the other hand, issues such as social policies were included in regional politics. Riggiozi and Tussie (2012) named this regionalism as *post hegemonic*. It featured the State as a relevant economic actor, a more intense regional agenda in political-institutional matters, deepening the intra-regional cooperation based on SSC, and a more confronting position concerning the USA's hegemonic status in the continent.

Therefore, a virtuous cycle between the SSC and the post hegemonic proposition was created. In other words, a relationship based on the mutual strengthening of SSC and regional integration. From 2003 to 2015, the region's institutional organization on international

cooperation was influenced by the SSC values and goals. In addition, this model of regional cooperation was reinforced by other arrangements. Institutions like UNASUR fomented the SSC model. Thus, the SSC became an essential cooperation model to promote regional development and intensify regional integration in various themes (Riggirozzi and Ryan, 2022).

A closer look at the Mercosur demonstrates this situation. In 2008, the Venezuelan attempt to create a High-Level Group for SSC Elaboration shows how it became a more important topic in the bloc, even though the idea did not go further. In 2012, the Technical Cooperation Committee (TCC) was replaced by the Group of International Cooperation (GIC). The GIC had more autonomy, compared to the TCC, to discuss and formulate cooperation programs for the bloc. Therefore, the GIC was a result of this new Mercosur's IDC model, with more control over the SSC projects in the regional scenario. The GIC formulated a Cooperation Politics to partnerships intra and extra regional in 2014. These politics referred to SSC values and goals, such as horizontality, mutual benefits, non-conditionalities, and solidarity (Paikin, 2019; Graziano and Caixeta, 2021). For this reason, this politics intensifies the presence of SSC in the institutional structure of the bloc. In the same way that it grows the involved actors' coordination and interdependency, taking into consideration the specific needs and features of each reality.

The 2008 Global North crisis affected not only the systemic structure of IDC but also affected how regional integral was understood and organized in South America. Until then, the Mercosur was influenced by the EU, seen as the ideal type of regional integration. As a reaction to the systemic adjustments, the bloc continued to promote autonomous regionalism. It recognized that regional development goes beyond trade and financial ties. Members shared issues started to be part of the agenda. Therefore, health, culture, poverty, and inequality were brought to the table. Moreover, not only States

were participating in these affairs, but also social and subnational actors were present in the process. Notwithstanding, this process had its obstacles. Mercosur was not able to create its funds to promote these cooperation projects. The member States have limited budgets and other foreign policy agendas, besides the regional sphere. Thus, even with a solid institutional structure, these partnerships were limited to different sources. The project's funding came from direct members and associate States, or extra-regional actors like the EU.

The South American political configuration became different in 2015. Mauricio Macri's (2015–2019) election and President Dilma Rousseff's impeachment in 2016 implicated in modification of how regionalism and cooperation were understood. The South American region turned right politically in the so-called Blue Wave. The ideas of open regionalism returned, focusing on trade and financial issues. The cooperation partnerships were directed towards the Global North.

Regardless of the Blue Wave, the Mercosur cooperation institutional structure was not affected. Thus, the institutional efforts secured in 2014 for the Cooperation Politics, which secured SSCs features remained untouched. Mercosur Cooperation Strategy (2018–2021) illustrates this fact. After exploring the document, the ideas remain untouched (Graziano and Caixeta, 2021). Another example was during the *pro tempore* Uruguayan presidency. During this presidency, the Mercosur Human Rights Institute and the Center-American Integration System promoted an exchange of good practices on human rights. Therefore, those institutions created an SSC partnership. Even though the institutional cooperation structures were the same, the SSC was not a priority in the region's international politics.

The triangular and bilateral cooperation models with partners from the Global North became relevant in the ICG, due to the need for funding for the projects. It places the region in a dependency situation like the colonial era. At the same time, the ICG deals with

another issue. Emma Mawdsley (2019) explains that the current hegemonic cooperation models, such as the OECD, adapted to the SSC. They emulate the notions of solidarity, mutual benefits, and horizontality, without committing politically to these ideas. To keep the *status quo*, these countries rewrite these ideas to impose their interests and ideologies, such as neoliberalism. In this regard, it is necessary to take a closer look at the ICG documentation to ponder the impacts of these IDC arrangements on Mercosur institutional cooperation.

South-South Cooperation and Mercosur

South-South Cooperation (SSC) and the construction of regionalisms are interconnected phenomena that reinforce each other, sometimes representing the same dynamics (Mercosur, 2018b). Regional blocs are born as structures for exchanging and sharing policies, experiences, goods, services, people, and others; therefore, they are structures oriented towards cooperation within this region.

In this sense, Mercosur is originally and legitimately a SSC experience, initiated in the first bilateral cooperation initiatives between Brazil and Argentina materialized in documents such as the Iguazu Declaration,³ the Joint Declaration on Nuclear Policy,⁴

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3 Treaty signed by Argentina and Brazil on November 30, 1985, in the city of Foz do Iguaçu (Brazil). The Declaration pointed to the construction of diplomatic channels for economic negotiation and coordination of public policies. The discussions initiated at this meeting laid the foundations for the economic and political integration of the Southern Cone.

4 Declaration, signed on the same date, on the formation of a working group in the diplomatic corps of the two countries with the intention of promoting the nuclear area and constituting mechanisms for peace, security, and regional development.

the Integration and Economic Cooperation Program (PICE)⁵ and the Treaty of Integration, Cooperation and Development.⁶ Subsequently, these initiatives culminated in the incorporation of Paraguay and Uruguay, and the construction of the Treaty of Asunción (1991).⁷

In this way, International Cooperation is a theme present in Mercosur since its foundation, among the first resolutions (Decision n.10/91) adopted by Common Market Council (CMC)⁸ was delegating to Common Market Group (GMC)⁹ the faculty of approving cooperation agreements from international organizations. In this context, GMC at the Resolution n.26/92 established the creation of the Technical Cooperation Committee (CCT).

In the initial years of the CCT's operation, Mercosur's International Cooperation policy was primarily oriented towards relations with the European Union, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). In addition to customs issues, the initiatives debated on Technical Standards, external tariffs, financing and support funds, and agricultural issues (GMC, 1997). In addition, the CCT performed functions in

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5 Established in July 1986, the program delegated to the Executive Committee the evaluation of the development and the proposals of measures and meetings according to the needs of evolution of the negotiations and construction of working groups, in addition to incorporating several sectorial protocols (Mariano, 2000).

6 Signed in November 1988, it established an execution commission and technical commissions for sectorial matters, with the objective of constituting, in ten years, a common economic space. In addition, it addressed other topics such as the full liberalization of trade and the elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers.

7 Treaty signed in March 1991, between Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay, with the aim of creating a common market between the agreed countries, thus forming what was popularly called Mercosur.

8 Mercosur's supreme body, whose function is the political conduct of the integration process. The CMC is formed by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Economy of the States Parties, who pronounce themselves through Decisions.

9 Mercosur's executive decision-making body, responsible for establishing work programs and negotiating agreements with third parties on behalf of Mercosur, by express delegation from the CMC.

Mercosur's bilateral meetings with other countries, regional blocs, and international organizations, reporting its progress to the GMC through reports at its regular and special meetings.

In 1997, through Resolution n.77/97, the specific competences and procedures of the Committee were established, which became an instrument for building and dialoguing with internal and external partners to the bloc in the construction of international cooperation actions. Despite previous resolutions and referrals, it was only in 2005 that the functioning of the CCT and the procedures for evaluating and approving technical cooperation projects were regulated.

Under the aegis of an open regionalism,¹⁰ inserted in the framework of globalization and the expansion of capitalism in the 1990s, which in the regional analytical perspective aimed to facilitate free trade and economic liberalization (Baptista, 2020). With that, Mercosur in the 1990s was oriented towards liberalization and deregulation actions, constituting a process of joint commercial insertion protected under the common external tariff.

In this sense, Mercosur received TC initiatives by the EU and IDB with the aim of strengthening the intergovernmental management of the integration process and the establishment of the Administrative Secretariat. As argued by Oddone and Perrota (2012) this cooperation, in the traditional style for North-South development, sought to spread the values of donor institutions and organizations, especially on the part of the EU, which sought to deepen interregional relations and expand its influence in South America.

Because of the Pink Wave,¹¹ a post-liberal or post-hegemonic regionalism was promoted, which reoriented cooperation between Latin American countries, with the search for a greater international

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10 Open regionalism is also defined as new regionalism, or second wave of regionalism.

11 Term used by Panizza (2006), among other authors, to define the phenomenon at the turn of the 21st century of left and center-left electoral victories in Latin America, in countries such as Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Bolivia, Honduras, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Nicaragua, and Paraguay.

presence and influence in the rules and decisions. In this logic, new regional mechanisms were created with agendas that sought greater political, economic, and social autonomy, with the diversification of strategies, construction of new organizations and deepening of institutionalization.

Mercosur experienced a period of deepening its institutional framework, increasing the number of Technical Committees, Working Groups and Administrative Technical Units. In addition, the bloc's agenda expanded, diversifying the themes beyond the founding commercial dynamics, with debates on human rights, education, health, social issues, reduction of asymmetries and others.

In this context, in 2012 the International Cooperation Group (GCI) was created, replacing the CCT as an auxiliary body of GMC in terms of intra and extra-bloc international cooperation. The Group becomes responsible for the attributions of identification, selection, negotiation, technical approval, monitoring and evaluation of projects and cooperation agreements.

The coordinators (one full member and one alternate) of the Member States in the GCI are guided by the Mercosur International Cooperation Policy (PCIM), created by Decision n.23/14, which advanced in the consolidation of the cooperative concept in the regional bloc. This policy defined the objectives, principles, modalities of cooperation in Mercosur, its institutional framework, methodology and priorities.

In support of the GCI, the Mercosur Secretary (SM) constitutes the Technical Unit for International Cooperation (UCTI) with the aim of assisting and advising the activities of the GCI in its activities, projects, and technical cooperation actions. In this sense, the competence to systematize and update the information on International Cooperation acquires a denser and priority institutional character, from the availability of with a minimum structure of two employees.

The institutional changes promoted in the 2010s redefined the organizational chart and the decision-making flow in terms of

cooperation in Mercosur, consolidating a triptych model: GCM-GCI-UCTI. The objectives of International Cooperation in Mercosur were defined by the Mercosur (2014) such as:

strengthen the capacities of each of the bloc members; deepen regional integration; reduce asymmetries between the bloc's countries; horizontally to exchange knowledge and experiences, good practices, public policies both within the bloc and with other existing regional and extra-regional integration bodies.¹²

Cooperation would be divided into two modalities: intrabloc, projects between Member States with the aim of reducing internal asymmetries and contributing to the integration process; and extrabloc, which include partnerships with countries, international organizations, or regional blocs to develop intra-Mercosur actions or initiatives from Mercosur to support the development of third parties. Furthermore, it should be guided by principles such as solidarity; respect for sovereignty, cultural, historical and institutional particularities; non-interference and non-conditionality; horizontality, equity, and consensus, among others (Mercosur, 2014).

For Mercosur, the heterogeneity of actors and the diversity of practices requires the construction of regional agendas converging with other regional blocs, which would allow common positions to materialize that enhance cooperation experiences and the sustainability of these processes, maximizing their effectiveness and building internal unity in the integration experiences (Mercosur, 2018a). The bloc's conceptions of cooperation, especially in the intrabloc dimension, are strongly permeated by narratives and discourses

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12 From the original: "fortalecer as capacidades de cada um dos membros do bloco; aprofundar a integração regional; reduzir as assimetrias entre os países do bloco; intercambiar de maneira horizontal conhecimentos e experiências, boas práticas, políticas públicas tanto no interior do bloco quanto com outras instâncias de integração regional e extrarregional existentes".

of strengthening the Global South, especially from the spread of post-hegemonic regionalism. In summary, as a definition of South-South Cooperation in Mercosur, we have

A modality of horizontal South-South cooperation in which at least two countries of the bloc participate (States Parties and Associates) whose objective is to contribute to the consolidation of the integration process, reduce asymmetries between countries, and/or strengthen technical capacities and institutional of each one of the members. Its execution is established based on programs, projects and/or actions, which are agreed upon in the sphere of Mercosur bodies and forums through the institutional and regulatory mechanisms in force in the bloc. Other extra-regional actors may eventually participate in its implementation to provide technical and/or financial support to CSSM initiatives. (GCI, 2017)¹³

In the first decade of the 2000s, we have a Mercosur that understands the imperative to incorporate policies to reduce asymmetries, strengthen social policies, expand the base of actors and social sectors involved in regional integration, re-signify institutionality and think about development in a more comprehensive way (Oddone and Perrota, 2012). As a result, there is already a diffusion of SSC initiatives among member and associated states, in multiple public policies, promoted in the thematic framework of the bloc, driven by social participation in spaces such as the Social Summits and the participation of congressional representatives in the Mercosur Parliament.

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- 13 From the original: "Una modalidad de cooperación horizontal sur-sur en el cual participan como mínimo dos países del bloque (Estados Partes y Asociados) cuyo objetivo es contribuir a la consolidación del proceso de integración, reducir las asimetrías entre los países, y/o fortalecer las capacidades técnicas e institucionales de cada uno de los miembros. Su ejecución se establece a partir de programas, proyectos y/o acciones, los cuales son acordados en el ámbito de los órganos y foros del Mercosur mediante los mecanismos institucionales y normativos vigentes en el bloque. En su implementación pueden participar, eventualmente, otros actores extra-regionales con el fin de brindar apoyo técnico y/o financiero a las iniciativas de CSSM".

Thus, in the South American progressive cycle, the prioritization of SSC as a tool for insertion and development “was shaping up as means to implement the new political and social agendas” (Graziano and Caixeta, 2021, p.175).¹⁴ Mercosur acted as a space to promote SSC, based on the strengthening of democracy and the deepening of the possibilities of joint development, its conditions for growth (Oddone and Perrota, 2012).

Product of the expansion of Mercosur’s social agenda and the construction of SSC actions, we have the Mercosur’s Strategic Social Action Plan (PEAS). The consolidation of priorities and the description of a transversal political agenda is a landmark of this period that allowed sectoral policies to be oriented internally and regionally by an action plan designed from and for Mercosur.

These PEAS’ axes of action¹⁵ articulate itself with various agendas and objectives presented in the Sustainable Development Goals, which have become a reference for building cooperation initiatives, defining the public policy agenda and funding priorities of the funding States. In Mercosur, the execution of the 2030 Agenda depends on the financial destination for this purpose, the diversification of forms of financing so that regional objectives are achieved is essential (Mercosur, 2018a).

The institutionalization of SSC in Mercosur passes through the “international trends in meeting the goals of the 2030 Agenda and changes in the performance of the DAC/OECD” (Graziano and

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14 From the original: “foi se configurando como caminho para implementação das novas agendas políticas e sociais”.

15 PEAS operates on ten axes, which are: Eradicate hunger, poverty and fight social inequalities; Ensuring human rights, humanitarian assistance and ethnic, racial and gender equality; Universalizing Public Health; Universalizing education and eradicating illiteracy; Valuing and promoting cultural diversity; Guarantee productive inclusion; Ensure access to decent work and social security rights; Promote Environmental Sustainability; Ensuring Social Dialogue; Establish regional cooperation mechanisms for the implementation and financing of social policies.

Caixeta, 2021, p.174).¹⁶ The 2030 Agenda Goals are an opportunity to increase cooperation and the exchange of experiences between the countries of the bloc, but also constitute an ambitious agenda for implementation with the existing structures (Mercosur, 2018b).

The implementation of the SDGs and their agenda are objectives of Mercosur, as one of the main international cooperation policies of the bloc, in documents such as: “International Cooperation Policy” (2014) and latest “Strategy on cooperation in Mercosur for the period 2018-2021”. In this way, different cooperation strategies coexist in Mercosur, largely affected by a common problem, financing.

From the perspective of financing, for example, there was a drop in resources for official development assistance (ODA) in the region. To maximize funding sources, Mercosur presents a development concept that includes multiple dimensions in order to promote cooperation processes that consider the specific needs and challenges of each country, encourage the fulfillment of the commitments of developed countries in relation to ODA and promote regional cooperation via SSC and/or TC (Mercosur, 2018a).

It should be noted that in Mercosur, funding has always focused on three priority sources: contributions from States Parties, contributions from extra-regional actors (regional and international organizations and/or partner countries) and regional cooperation funds (Mercosur, 2018b). All these elements affect the conception of overcoming intrabloc structural inequalities and asymmetries, as well as the construction of new development agendas for the region.

As an instrument of SSC and overcoming external dependence to finance its policies, in 2004 Mercosur created the Mercosur's Structural Convergence Fund (FOCEM), based on the Decisions of the CMC n.45/04 and n.18/05. With the objective of improving

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16 From the original: “tendências internacionais de cumprimento das metas da Agenda 2030 e de mudança na atuação do CAD/OCDE”.

the functioning of the bloc and deepening the dynamics of the integration process, the fund would be based on the financing of projects to promote structural convergence; develop competitiveness; promote social cohesion and reduce asymmetries between major and minor partners.

Important projects were financed by the Fund, especially in Paraguay and Uruguay in strategic sectors for regional infrastructure, being a concrete step towards the advancement of SSC and South American regionalism. However, FOCEM represents an important mechanism for the institutional evolution of Mercosur, despite being insufficient, due to the low budget, for an effective reduction of asymmetries (Baptista, 2020).

In addition, there are other funds in force since 2012 such as the Education Fund (FEM) and Family Agriculture Fund (FAF); and not in force but that have already worked in the bloc, we have the Culture Fund (FMC), the Tourism Promotion Fund (FPTUR), and the Cooperative Promotion Fund (FCOOP Mercosur). These funds are oriented towards the financing of actions and public policies specific to their sectoral purposes, with the articulation of the ministries, with a majority contribution from the larger partners of Mercosur. It should be noted that from the approval of the Decision n.46/14, the participation of Associated States in the activities of the bloc's Funds was authorized, as an instrument for deepening joint actions in areas of common interest (Mercosur, 2018b).

In Mercosur's conception, the expansion of SSC and TC contribute to the deepening of regional integration, constituted by the exchange of experiences, practices, knowledge and policies. However, there are institutional challenges for its construction, such as:

the strengthening of the SSC management mechanisms; the development of initiatives that are relevant, of quality and results-oriented and the design of a mechanism for the registration and systematization of SSC initiatives, to facilitate decision-making and give greater visibility to this type

of cooperation. And, from the financial point of view, sustainable mechanisms must be sought that allow the realization of new regional SSC initiatives and through TC, with traditional and non-traditional partners, to overcome the decrease in resources for cooperation towards the region. (Mercosur, 2018a)¹⁷

In perspective, the main cooperation themes that Mercosur developed were related to institutional development, agricultural and food issues, border issues, education, health, science and technology, work, human rights, among others. Most of the initiatives carried out intra-bloc and in partnership with the European Union, IDB, Latin American Development Bank, agencies of the United Nations system and the Organization of American States (OAS).

In a study by the Mercosur Secretariat (Mercosur, 2018b), intra-bloc cooperation was evaluated in seven sectors to measure the initiatives and understand the dimension of these projects. In this study, about twenty bodies and internal forums of the bloc were evaluated, where it was found that during the period 2005-2015 there were 610 intra-Mercosur technical cooperation initiatives.

The results of the study show that from the chosen sectors, education, health, family farming, and science and technology represented 85 percent of the initiatives; in addition, in the universe studied, almost half of the identifiable resources were financed by extra-Mercosur partners (Mercosur, 2018b). In addition, there is an important component in these projects, the participation of several civil society organizations and social movements in the activities.

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17 From the original: "el fortalecimiento de los mecanismos de gestión de la CSS; el desarrollo de iniciativas que sean relevantes, de calidad y orientadas a resultados y el diseño de un mecanismo para el registro y sistematización de las iniciativas de CSS, con el fin de facilitar la toma de decisiones y dar mayor visibilidad a esta modalidad de cooperación. Y, desde el punto de vista financiero se deberán buscar mecanismos sostenibles que permitan la concreción de nuevas iniciativas regionales de CSS y a través de CT, con socios tradicionales y no tradicionales, para superar la disminución de los recursos para la cooperación hacia la región".

Among the regional cooperation actions, it is worth highlighting the development of a subnational agenda between the cities, states, and provinces of Mercosur. Initiatives such Consultative Forum of Municipalities, Federated States, Provinces, and Departments of Mercosur (FCCR) – within the institutional structure of Mercosur, and the Mercosur Cities Network (Mercocities) – autonomously, they make it possible to expand and enhance the exchange of experiences for SSC and TC.

For example, organized within the scope of Mercocities, there is the South-South Cooperation Program that promotes cooperation and exchange actions between the local governments of member cities and third parties. Despite the institutionality of the bloc, cooperation initiatives have emerged that aim to position subnational actors as protagonists of International Cooperation, enhanced by the integration process, but not counted as direct actions of Mercosur.

In terms of extra-bloc cooperation, taking stock of 30 years of Mercosur, the GCI (2021) points out that there were more than 50 projects executed, which correspond to a financial inflow of more than 126 million dollars. The projects were developed in different themes and with different funding partners. For GCI (2021), despite the scarce resources, the initiatives contributed to a greater integration between the work teams and the beneficiary institutions of Mercosur. With material achievements such as “obtaining infrastructure, equipment and supplies; the development of computer systems; the preparation of manuals and publications; the training of officials; conducting seminars and conferences; among others” (GCI, 2021, p.7).¹⁸

Thus, we can observe that SSC in Mercosur generated the articulation of new inter-institutional mechanisms, not necessarily in all

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18 From the original: “obtención de infraestructura, equipamientos e insumos; el desarrollo de sistemas informáticos; la elaboración de manuales y publicaciones; la formación de funcionarios; la realización de seminarios y conferencias; entre otros”.

sectors, but at least in some of them (Oddone and Perrota, 2012). Deepening SSC in Mercosur indicates the need to deepen integration, and greater integration generates greater cooperation (Mercosur, 2018b), at multiple levels and sectors. In Mercosur, there is “potential to lead the construction of a governance architecture that actually transcends hegemonic paradigms” (Graziano and Caixeta, 2021, p.190).¹⁹

To this end, some challenges are posed to the bloc, such as: communication and visibility of regional SSC actions; the lack of a regular mechanism for surveying and systematizing cooperation actions, which would provide greater transparency and visibility; the creation of information systems to systematize and update the initiatives (Mercosur, 2018b). In addition, the ubiquitous point of financing of SSC actions in Mercosur and the promotion of the bloc’s actions vis-à-vis other countries in the Global South constitute a vital point of transformation and autonomy of the initiatives.

Mercosur remains a space for receiving cooperation initiatives, with the need to overcome various issues of asymmetries within the bloc and internal contradictions in the development of its partners. However, the region, due to its capabilities, expertise and knowledge regarding the issues of the Global South, are central as offerors of Cooperation, depending on a reflection on the role of these countries and the leading role they intend to exercise in the international community.

Conclusion

At a full length, this chapter our purpose was to explore the repercussions of the UN 2030 Agenda on Mercosur cooperation

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19 From the original: “potencial para liderar a construção de uma arquitetura de governança que de fato transcenda os paradigmas hegemônicos”.

practices, particularly the SSC mechanisms. In essence, it was pointed out that the SDGs were embraced by the bloc institutionality; however, there are a few contradictions in the process. In the SSC established definition the State is a key actor as a leader in the development policies, thus it would be challenging to carry on the goals neoliberal recommendations. Moreover, the bloc still must work through its own financial and institutional obstacles regarding the SSC partnerships done between the members and extra regional actors.

Other than overweighing those inconsistencies, the work also contributes to debate on whether those concepts and political practices shaped by the hegemon institutions and the western powers can be successful in a Global South reality. Those debates must not be ignored; on the other hand, they cannot be emulated in a singular scenario. Therefore, to enrich this discussion, the South American countries' effective development experiences must be part of the discussion. Therefore, cooperation partnerships would not only be more representative of serious demands, but they could also become more autonomous regarding the western powers.

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8.

SECURITY PRACTICES OF THE ARMED FORCES IN SOUTH AMERICA



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Introduction

IN THIS CHAPTER, WE WILL ADDRESS THE CASES OF Brazil and Colombia to understand how security provision and military activities are still bound to a controlling perspective and have managed to sustain the domestic use of force in formal democratic rules. There is an overall premise that, in democracies, the Armed Forces do not engage domestically unless the country faces extreme circumstances, typically known in political science as the exceptional paradigm. Nevertheless, in South America, there have been few times when one could draw a clear-cut line between what is the norm and what is not, as emergencies, crises, violence, and conflict are embedded in daily life. One could follow



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Benjamin's statement and argue that this is a global truth, where emergency and crisis are the norm, not the exception.

The particularity concerning the contemporary use of military force in South America is that it has entrenched itself domestically, mainly through normal-bound procedures within public administration and the rule of law. This process contradicted many expectations – from scholars to politicians – that democratization and peace efforts furthered by reforms in civil-military relations would hinder military engagement in domestic affairs. While it is true that official military participation in politics has somewhat diminished, military missions inside the territory bolstered military power over domestic issues, such as public security, education, health, disputes in rural areas and urban settings, as part of broader efforts to tackle organized crime, terrorism and political violence, which are deemed major threats for both States (Brasil, 2012; Colombia, 2019).

Concerning ourselves with qualitative democracies and the effort in this book to address the Development Goals, mainly Goal 16, Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, we present alternative approaches towards the domestic use of force by the military beyond their alleged necessity, efficiency, or eligibility in democratic rules. By resorting to critical Marxist and International Political thought, we hope to highlight those inherent struggles deep-seated in warfare and policing have historically placed the population as the State's constant targeted threat. Moreover, we argue that the performance of the military (and police) profession itself may help explain our current predicament.

We argue that in these countries, threat assessment and decisions concerning the use of force are mainly done by the Armed Forces and embedded in historical notions that the population is potentially disruptive due to risk elements created by the lack of socio-political cohesion and public order. This adds yet another layer to South America's dilemma and challenges on Sustainable

Development Goals because, as we will highlight, development has also been heavily associated with tackling domestic threats within military reasoning as counterinsurgency and stabilization strategies.

1. Security and the use of force within democracies

When it comes to establishing good governance and fortifying democracy, we cannot – and should not – avoid addressing the hanging sword of Damocles in liberal democratic regimes: the Armed Forces and the use of State violence. In modern States, legitimate violence is exerted through professional agents specialized in warfare and policing, activities deemed necessary to keep the State and the people safe from foreign attacks and domestic perils, respectively. A *sine qua non* condition for democracy is to have these agents under civilian authority and oversight to prevent, for instance, the military engaging in warfare against its own citizens and overruling elected governments through arms, or the excessive use of police force, brutality and widespread violations of human rights. This is where we strive to achieve Development Goal 16, “Peace and Justice Strong Institutions”, dealing with the complex matter of balancing and controlling the use of force through democratic mechanisms that, however effective, do not entirely extinguish the possibility of such occurrences.

For South America, this challenge is layered with the historical effects of colonization, State-formation, authoritarianism, and militarism. For most countries, State violence and military force have been employed mainly for domestic stabilization and control purposes during the 19th and 20th centuries, in which the latest was deeply marked by counterinsurgency, the Cold War, and National Security Doctrines. In the 1990s, political efforts towards democratization attempted to curb military influence over the political realm and to deal with the increasing urge to tackle new security

phenomena such as transnational and global crime, terrorism, migrations, and other issues that, through globalization, quickly rose to the status of international concern (Bruneau and Trinkunas, 2006).

There is a debate among security scholars as to whether contemporary democracies in South America can – or should – accommodate the domestic use of military force. Some argue that domestic military engagement is somewhat of a bitter pill or a pragmatic solution to these contemporary threats and the changing nature of conflicts that afflict the region, as well as natural disasters, corruption, and other matters related to underdevelopment (Bruneau and Matei, 2013; Pion-Berlin, 2016). Within this reasoning, it is up to civilian authorities to strengthen their grip over military activities through oversight, institutional dialogue, and accountability measures, while working alongside the Armed Forces to negotiate conditions that will help them maintain its status, budget, and other demands that do not clash with democratic principles nor the rule of law. Counterarguments indicate that the region's high levels of military autonomy do not allow room for compromise with military public security operations, as they tend to promote militarism (Diamint, 2015). In addition, they reinforce authoritarian perspectives since there is still a perception of internal threats because the State and the military still perceive the population as a threat instead of what it ought to be protected (Vitelli, 2020).

While this debate is highly influential, we believe two other provocative approaches may contribute to further scrutinize the use of force within democracies: the Marxist approach to contemporary security studies and *International Political Sociology's* professional practice contribution.

From a Marxist perspective, the domestic has always been at the root of State violence, from what Marx and Engels metaphorize as capitalism's *original sin*: primitive accumulation.

After the Paris Commune, Marx (2011) argued that the national armies and inter-state wars were, straightforwardly, a farce. Instead

of its alleged goal of protecting the population against invasions, warfare would be the apex of the capacity of the ruling class to monopolize coercion, organizing violence in such a fashion that further oppressed the working class by: a) forcing people to partake in its efforts through military service and national mobilization, b) actively hindering workers' internationalization by stirring nationalism, and c) enriching industrialists (Luxemburg, 1971).

This warfare would only be achievable due to earlier and continuing expropriation – which closely relates to our topic in this chapter. Capitalism and the modern State are products of violent worldwide expropriation processes, and during the 16th and 18th centuries, colonization wars played a major role (Klein, 2016). By expropriating the land, hunting and exterminating or civilizing indigenous communities, European armies learned how to pacify the people: fabricate social order through organized violence, in which hunting for people to enslave and control is its foundation stone (Neocleous, 2013).

Ever since the massive witch-hunt campaigns in Europe, the hunt for people, Federici (2007) and Neocleous (2013) argue, have informed how sovereignty and political authority were built in modern States. When political authority rules that a specific group of individuals is a threat to the sovereign power, it enacts law and order measures to cloister the population, inciting fear and enabling surveillance, apprehension tactics, trials, and tortures. All of these are at the root of police activities that exist to control populations and have also informed how armies were to behave in civilizing efforts – as Neocleous (2014) puts it, “civilizing offensives” or “civilizational wars” Alliez and Lazaratto (2021).

Thus, this approach highlights that when these colonizing and pacifying forces were organized in professional, permanent and bureaucratic organizations to engage in large-scale wars such as World Wars I and II, the basis of organized violence did not change. Armed Forces and Police Forces are split, yet connected,

means – warfare and law enforcement – to the same goal: to keep State and Capital functioning. That would be the true meaning of Security (Neocleous, 2014). Furthermore, raging nation wars in the European continent did not replace colonization. On the contrary, exploration in regions such as Africa and Asia remained vital enterprises for their war effort, which is why Lenin insisted on imperialism critique. Nor, as Neocleous (2014) argues, did industrial warfare replace the hunting logic of military action – it did, however, provide new tools to perform it.

When airpower came through in World War II, it became easier to visualize the all-in-one coercion because it enacted warfare, policing, and hunting as pacification from above (Neocleous, 2014). An armed aircraft can eliminate an enemy, surveil the territory, and search and recognize enemies and potential threats while informing the people below that it can do all those things, thus hindering their possibility to fight back. The higher the aircraft, the more under its control, and since then, warfare, policing, and the hunt have only been looking up and verticalizing themselves through cameras, satellites, and UAVs (Neocleous, 2013; 2014; Chamayou, 2015).

While agreeing with these arguments as to why organized violence is so deeply-seated within liberal regimes built upon former colonies and its interpretation of security as an inherently pacifying activity from which one cannot draw a clear cut between warfare and police activities, we should note that this approach provides more broad-based analysis that may not account for nuanced socio-political contexts, nor specific power dynamics *within* security. For instance, scholars working with War on Drugs and militarism in public security in Global South usually see these phenomena as responses to global capitalism and world power's agendas to bolster its security apparatus and markets.

Permanent military campaigns in Colombia, for example, could be seen as part of a broader U.S. strategy to keep the region pacified, ensuring that the country will be available for resource exploration

from drugs to minerals and, surely, people, while also hunting for criminals and keeping the security industry functioning, as it feeds the market with new technologies and products (Neocleous, 2013). Another example would be Brazilian and South African military responses in public security during the 2010s, when Global South regions' hosting of major international events called forth the demand for safer cities for tourism and investment (Saborio, 2013; McMichael, 2013).

To look through another window to address why and how security works the way it does in certain countries and cities, one could shift perspectives from broader power dynamics to specifically localized dynamics within the agents who perform it (Balzacq et al., 2010). By focusing on the military itself – the police and other security agents –, we understand security as a socio-political construct. It is produced by those who are socialized around it, who speak its language, who know its bureaucratic routines and how to operate its systems, its weapons, who wear its uniforms, who constitute a complex field of professionals devoted to *think* and *do* security.

Thus, IPS conceptualizes security as a set of practices enacted by its professionals, from routine procedures to war efforts, from which the very (in)securitization processes derive from (Balzacq et al., 2010). This is a different concept than the one known as securitization designed by the Copenhagen School. First, it highlights that security and insecurity are co-constitutive. When producing security, one also produces insecurity because it enacts fear and uncertainty. More tangibly, it will entail some sort of coercion towards whoever is placed under the “threat” category. Secondly, it understands that discourse is one of the ways to circulate fear around a specific object and turn it into a matter of security. Nevertheless, discourse itself can be seen as a practice, and the speech act requires more complex non-discursive practices to fulfill its securitizing course. Third, by focusing on practices within the field of security, it also highlights that not all agents have the power and social capital

to produce securitization processes. Security professionals are privileged agents in constructing threats at global and local levels because it is their area of expertise. Their field usually enjoys considerable autonomy to operate their regulatory instruments (doctrines, rules and protocols, among others) and their capabilities, such as skills, and material and financial resources (Balzacq et al., 2010).

This field of professionals sets in motion a myriad of “little security nothings” (Huysmans, 2011). There is a lingering sense that there are risks everywhere, from credit card frauds to street robbery, from terrorist attacks to armed invasions or nuclear contamination that this field perpetrates. It is their job to search for risks and to elaborate and implement the range of safety and surveillance measures spread across social spaces (hidden and in plain sight), from residencies to airports and borders, thus imprinting risk and insecurity in ourselves. Indeed, different cities and countries will display diversified features of said security nothings. If we consider Brazil and Colombia, these security *nothings* share space with ostensive security operations in which the violence is much more tangible.

Considering these differences, IPS argues that this professional field is a transversal network. In this network, we can observe such distinctive features, North-South power dynamics, market interests, and all sorts of tensions and struggles that are bound to arise when dealing with such a complex matter (Bigo, 2008). The first visuals of the field were drawn in the 1990s, by observing the extent to which police agencies were the driving forces pushing for international rotations and trainings so they could better respond to globalizing threats such as organized crime and terrorism (Bigo, 2006). Conversely, military forces have been further engaged in stabilization missions, police activities, humanitarian relief, and widespread asymmetrical warfare. This process kickstarted the debate over the *blurring* between the military and the police – further layered by the creation of specialized hybrid forces designed to perform in the alleged gray area between warfare and police. With expanding

operations, countries from the global South joined in on stabilization efforts through United Nations' peace missions whose scope of military, police and civilian activities broadened and deepened in scope (Kenkel, 2013), and the field turned even more complex.

When it comes to analyzing the effect these security practices have on organizing violence in democracies and liberal regimes, the reasoning is different from what we have seen before. Where Marxist critiques pinpoint security, pacification, and violence at the roots of liberal organizations, the practice approach calls out to the constant re-shaping of democracy and liberal regimes *through* security practices, much to the detriment of democratic quality. Surveillance is one of the most significant causes of concern in this matter, as several scholars have been warning against the dangers of surveillance practices that have grown and stretched to incommensurable levels in all spheres of human life – as well as interactions between human and machine and between human and nature (Haggerty and Erickson, 1997; Lyon, 2003). Counterterrorism efforts – which also resort to mass surveillance – also stirred debates on how security measures enacted blatantly anti-democratic measures, from Guantanamo to Abu Ghraib (Bigo and Tsoukala, 2008). Also high on preoccupations lists are border security and migration crisis, as refugee camps and border zones have become a laboratory for scrutiny, surveillance, exploration, and all sorts of control over unarmed populations (Cote-Boucher, Infantino, and Salter, 2014).

By emphasizing that security practices shape and re-shape political power, the practice approach stresses the routinization of such practices through normality, through the very regulatory procedures, whether in domestic realm or international organizations (Huysmans, 2011; Bonditti and Olsson, 2017). Taking the U.S. and NATO interventions for stabilization and counterterrorist purposes as an example, Olsson (2015) analyzes how interventionism normalized itself in contemporary world politics beyond the speech power of counterterrorism. The military, special forces, and intelligence

agencies involved in these operations sustained and recycled the *means* to conduct interventions: what protocols to activate, how to create new protocols if necessary, who to speak to, how to reach out and negotiate with local authorities, how to train local forces, what legal documents to mobilize, among other tactics. Because they have the knowledge and the professional *expertise* to intervene, intervention is considered an option and, therefore, becomes part of international politics as standard operation procedures (Olsson, 2015). This is also tangible in UN operations (Janot, 2020), as there are highly bureaucratized means of *handling* the sovereign non-intervention principle by enacting accords, rules of engagement, memorandums of understandings and intricate chains of commands to make these operations work – and these measures are all performed by security professionals.

Finally, we stress that it is not a coincidence that these forms of military-police operations that have an asymmetrical aspect to it and are deployed over a population considered vulnerable, unstable and dangerous closely resemble counterinsurgency doctrines, which will be addressed on the next section.

2. Historical background and the practice of counterinsurgency

Despite the different independence processes during the 19th century, a common ground among South American countries is the historical formation of armies that are essentially focused on national consolidation, political stabilization, and social integration (O'Donnel, 1986; D'Araujo and Castro, 2000). Although colonial border configurations have indeed fueled disputes between newly independent states, most of the region's military history is embedded in domestic engagement.

By the early decades of the 20th century, a significant issue for these Armed Forces was to settle their status as modern, professional

organizations. Promoting exchange missions among themselves and with European military, most countries achieved this by the 1940s, when Cold War hit the region (Perlmutter, 1977). Brazil and Colombia, the object of this chapter, share two elements in this process: intense political action of the Armed Forces, and the influence of National Security Doctrine and counterinsurgency.

From the second half of the 20th century onwards, the Cold War heated up the U.S. onslaught over the region, which had gradually begun with the Monroe Doctrine. This particular context during the Cold War came to be known as the National Security Doctrine, a set of ideological guidelines shaped by U.S. National Security Strategies to curb Soviet influence in the American Hemisphere by promoting U.S. power through military strength, economic and political assistance, following the major guidelines of the security-development association: ensuring order and stability while creating the conditions for prosperity within society (education, science, culture), politics (strong institutions) and economy (competitive market, strong industries, resource availability), which retro-feeds order and stability by inhibiting revolts and civil unrest (Duffield, 2010). Of course, this could very well be read as part of pacification processes, as previously discussed.

For all effects and purposes, this set of strategies hit Latin America and the Caribbean mainly through military counterinsurgency training and political and financial assistance to bolster U.S.-aligned governments. Focusing on the military aspect, we should note that even though the U.S. played a significant role in this counterinsurgency fan-out, it should be noted that this particular type of warfare doctrine has mainly French roots.

As we have highlighted through the Marxist approach, all modern states' military and security apparatus concern themselves with social order. Even inter-state conflicts – as capitalist enterprises – still function as domestic oppression mechanisms. Nevertheless, there is a difference between doctrines that focus on battling similar armies and those that focus on battling and policing the population

itself, and when the European military organized itself in professional armies, the largest share of its writings and doctrinal formulation focused on the former – even though the latter had been in practice since colonization. It is during the suppression of national liberations movements in former European colonies, such as Algeria and Vietnam, that counterinsurgency is established as the “modern warfare” (Trinquier, 1964).

In general, adapting the military to perform counterinsurgency requires training the Armed Forces to carry out ostensive policing, massive investment in intelligence services and civic actions. It also requires the legal flexibility to enable apprehensions, arrests, detentions and all means necessary – torture included – to tackle insurgency in all its stages, especially early-identified ones (Trinquier, 1964; Galula, 2006). One of the fundamentals in counterinsurgency is assuring control over the population and its territory, as subversion can manifest itself in the armed action of insurgent groups or in the form of protests, but also in commercial circulation, land use, extraction, and planting, so the Armed Forces – in the position of counterinsurgency – would need to modernize to operate in urban and rural contexts, open and pave roads, establish checkpoints and surveillance points, create a network of collaborators (informants), invest in terrain and people recognition technologies, develop information cataloging systems on people, currency, cultural habits, products, land, in short, everything that constitutes the population-territory set on which we operate (Trinquier, 1964).

Yet another structuring point of counterinsurgency is its long-term forecast since its political objective is stabilizing political authority. For this purpose, counterinsurgency handles long-term measures such as government and local authority reforms. Their main goal is to ensure that the political, military, and police organs can prevent and curb revolts on their own and remain adherent to the counterinsurgency’s goals and interests. Furthermore, such measures aid in the overall winning hearts and minds policy.

Investing in social, political and economic development as a strategy to tackle subversions is at the heart of the security and development association, which strongly relates to U.S. policy during the Cold War and afterwards (Hettne, 2010). During the 1960s, McNamara's (1968) speech arguing that security is development, and vice-versa, illustrates the ideological package that circulated in that period and the measures adopted for the continent to install hemispheric stability based on the Truman Doctrine. The first significant step within this Doctrine was with the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (known as the Rio Treaty) in 1947.

Essentially, the Treaty determined that all American states would be committed to assisting their member states if external forces were to attack any of them. Then, the region birthed the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Inter-American Defense Board (IADB), creating a forum to exchange in political, economic, and military matters. Within this forum, the U.S. installs the Military Assistance Program (PAM) to provide military resources, including counterinsurgency training (Fernandes, 2009). It is also within this forum that financial aid programs such as the USAID came through.

In military schools and development programs, the Armed Forces and other professionals involved in bureaucracy, industries and companies in South America began to spread both the counterinsurgency doctrines and the security-development link as combined strategies to contain international communism. Above all, they intended to suppress political dissent and social movements that could threaten national security. For some countries, such as Brazil, Argentina and Chile, this process enabled long-term military dictatorships in which the Armed Forces ruled through public administration (O'Donnell, 1986). In other countries, such as Colombia, the military had erratic participation in civilian office yet maintained its stronghold over National Security matters and ties with the authoritarian civilian ruling (Leal, 2007). What brings

Brazil and Colombia together is the enduring effect of counterinsurgency doctrines' diffusion through the above-mentioned War Schools, as these doctrines were highly influential up until the late 1980s – and, as we argue, they remain.

In Brazil, the War School (*Escola Superior de Guerra*, or ESG, in Portuguese) was the corollary of political articulation between the Armed Forces, political, and economic elites to seize executive power (Dreifuss, 1981). Historically, the consolidation of oligarchic elites in the State's public bureaucracy (Fernandes, 1976) and the military professionalization since the 1930s (Coelho, 2000) paved the way for counterinsurgency and National Security to function as an all-encompassing military political action plan over the State, its institutions and, moreover, its people (Janot, 2020).

The School defined security as “the conservation of the traditional values of the Nation” and development as the “improvement and progress of the Nation” (Lentz, 2019). By linking development with progress promoted by the military, the causal implication is that a coercive force is required for the country to progress towards the fullness of its economic, industrial, moral, political and military capabilities. Promoting development (progress) whilst preserving order and traditional values entailed a broad-spectrum process of careful strategic planning and permanent intervention (Couto e Silva, 1981, p.407) in all these areas, placing the military in high-level executive functions as well as routine surveillance, patrol and apprehensions, and continuous civic missions across the territory.

In Colombia, the context of internal conflicts and the rise of guerrilla groups in the 1960s – from which the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and National Liberation Army (ELN) are born – stimulated a counterinsurgency response hyper-focused on direct military action over the population. Thus, the Colombian War School (*Escuela Superior de Guerra*, in Spanish) became a space for counterinsurgency design, in which the military had high levels of autonomy to do so (Leal, 2007). With

direct assistance from the U.S. counterinsurgency Mobile Training Team, the Colombian Armed Forces formulated and implemented *Plan Lazo*, a broad-ranging counterinsurgency campaign aimed at curbing subversion through military action, promoting policing duties and civic actions for the next few decades. One of the main articulators in this context is the officer General Ruiz, defending progress and reforms as the main strategies to tackle communism and guerrillas, more prone to manifest themselves in “backwards” regions and societies (Leal, 2007, p.22). It is in the context of Plan Lazo that the multipurpose teams – tactical groups of flexible mobilization throughout the territory acting in propaganda and social assistance efforts – acquire greater strength.

Hence, the main distinguishing element between Brazil and Colombia in this period is the active military participation in the civil political administration. It lasted for two decades in Brazil, while, in Colombia, this participation amounted to five years: the mandate of General Rojas Pinilla and the Military Junta that had been at the head of the government to consolidate the National Front (Velásquez, 2010). Nevertheless, we should note that even though the military did not partake in direct rule for long, participating as they did alongside an authoritarian coalition government as the National Front is also a path for military intervention to entrench itself in administrative spheres, as well as power dynamics in daily political life (Finer, 1962).

Another interesting link between the countries is how the military liaised with the police whilst formulating and implementing counterinsurgency. In Colombia, the National Police underwent a major reform during General Rojas Pinilla’s administration and was officially incorporated into the Ministry of Defense as a fourth force (Velásquez, 2010, p.82-83). A similar movement happened in Brazil. The Military Police, instated as an Army reserve force in the 1930s and shaped according to its image and likeness, played major ostensive activities during the military dictatorship and officially joined

the Army's information and intelligence-gathering system (Muniz, 1999, p.77).

Thus, both countries share a similar trait regarding counterinsurgency perspective and National Security. The Armed Forces lead and mobilize the State security to preserve order, emphasizing civic actions, propaganda, and surveillance to identify threats and, ideally, to anticipate political dissent and potential places in which insurgency could erupt by reducing variables that could feed revolt and adhesion to communist ideologies.

A group of researchers identifies that the end of the Cold War did not imply the overcoming of the National Security Doctrine, especially in Brazil, where the transition was controlled, guaranteed considerable military autonomy and space for political and doctrinal articulation on Defense and Security (Soares, 2006; Costa, 2009; Meneghim Donadelli, Saint-Pierre, and Vitelli, 2021). Nor did it imply overcoming the linkage between security and development; on the contrary, it was even reiterated by the democratization agendas in the context of the 1990s. Organizations such as the United Nations (UN), OAS, and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) began circulating the nexus between security and development as democratization efforts, aligned with the growing demands for countries to tackle the then-called New Threats, such as terrorism and organized crime (Janot, 2020), as well as the Multidimensional Security approach that circulated within the American hemisphere (Saint-Pierre, 2011).

3. Contemporary use of force

3.1. Colombia

In the 1980s and 1990s, Colombia went through a unique political process in the region. After the dissolution of the National Front

and the opening towards free competitive elections, the country faced the question on how to deal with the guerrillas, aiming a cease of hostilities and the signing of peace agreements through which the Colombian State could strengthen its grasps over the class aspects of legitimate ruling (Velásquez, 2010, p.139). As guerrillas had been increasingly associated with drug trafficking, the War on Drugs agenda greatly influenced this process (Rodrigues, 2016).

Since the Reagan and George Bush administrations, national security directives have gradually emphasized the importance of collaboration between governments and Armed Forces throughout the Caribbean and Latin America (Rodrigues, 2012). In Colombia, this established a *mingling* of interests: on the one hand, the Colombian State was concerned with suppressing armed groups and ensuring its control over the territory, and on the other hand, the North American power was offering resources to fight them as part of the War on Drugs offensive. Henceforth, *guerrillas* like FARC and ELN, their dissidents, and other associated armed groups were then labeled as *narco-guerrillas*, a threat defined *both* by its criminal activity dimension – drug consumption and trafficking – and for being an armed group disrupting the State (Rodrigues, 2016).

Thus, during the 1990s, the Colombian State and the USA invested in military and police reforms to meet these demands, culminating in the widely known Plan Colombia. Broadly speaking, the Plan was a bilateral agreement with the United States, signed during the administration of Andrés Pastrana (1998–2002), in which assistance would be provided to combat guerrillas and drug trafficking, investing mainly in economic and social development, as well as modernizing the Colombian armed and police forces, providing them with modern equipment and technologies, optimizing their integration and capacity for joint action, and placing them within the rules of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (Velásquez, 2010).

In 2002, at the wake of the War on Terror, there is yet another mingling of interests with Álvaro Uribe and George W. Bush

administrations, both known for conservative stands in Colombia and the U.S., respectively (Rodrigues, 2016). This combination enacted an even broader, large-scale security phenomenon for the region with global reach. There is an association of guerrilla activity with terrorism because engaging in political violence is then labeled as an act of terrorism. They are still related to drug trafficking, being associated with illegal financing and money laundering, creating the term *narcoterrorism*. Thus, the FARC ELN and other groups are no longer considered guerrillas that only threaten the Colombian State and become global threats because both organized crime and terrorism are disseminated on the international scene as transnational threats to international peace (Rodrigues, 2016).

Since then, the reforms and transformations in Colombian military and police organizations and their forms of domestic engagement have been widely analyzed as an example of Security Sector Reform (SSR): the re-adaptation of the umbrella of security institutions to effectively and efficiently tackle these new threats, complying with the institutional parameters of liberal democracy and serving, above all, as a political tool for stabilization in the peripheries of the international system disseminated by organizations such as the United Nations, OAS, and OECD (Aguilar, 2014; Janot, 2020).

Thus, with massive U.S. investment, the Colombian Armed Forces reorganized themselves internally, expanding their numbers, creating Joint Commands for each country region in order to improve integration and coordination, as well as specialized units to combat drug trafficking, such as the Joint Task Force of the South and the Anti-Narcotics Brigade (Velásquez, 2010). Focusing on military engagement and *how* the Armed Forces engaged domestically, we first highlight that Colombia's Democratic Defense and Security Policy (2003) stressed the eradication of *terrorism*, considered to be the major threat to democratic consolidation, order, and security in the country, perpetrated by guerrillas and paramilitary groups.

After terrorism, Colombia (Colombia, 2003, p.24-31) lists the following associated threats: illicit drug trade; illicit finance (corruption and financial crimes); trafficking in arms, ammunition and explosives; kidnapping and extortion; homicide. It is significant to note that the main Colombian strategic objective is to ensure state control over the territory (Colombia, 2003, p.33), which includes military control and law enforcement over areas under the influence of any other groups that are not Colombia's official institutions.

During the early years of this major counterinsurgency-counterterrorism effort, Colombia's military engagement followed the *Plan Patriota* (2002-2007), a joint doctrine to face irregular wars (Colombia, 2002).

According to the U.S. Army Special Forces (ArSOF, 2006) – the leading partner responsible for formulating this joint action – *Plan Patriota* was based on general guidelines of standard counterinsurgency, very close to what had already been practiced in the context of the Plan Lazo. *Plan Patriota* first focused on robust military action in areas considered critical with short-term civic actions to rapidly keep public opinion on its side, then moved to second phase of police fortification and law enforcement in the area, quickly followed by a third phase of stabilization, investing in long-term social, economic and political measures to preserve public order.

With more financial aid and resources, the Colombian Armed Forces invested in a broad land mobilization called *Plano Meteoro*. This joint effort of the Army and Navy in coordination with the Ministry of Transport for paving and modernizing roads, allowed the passage of armored military vehicles to secure national routes. This mobilization was highly useful to support Plan Patriota, as it allowed to expand the military service bases, activating the *Soldados Campesinos* program, which assured military entry into more remote, rural areas.

As this military engagement allowed for ground victories, the Colombian Armed Forces moved towards a Consolidation Plan

(2007) in order to ensure stabilization through the so-called *virtuous circle of security*: investment in security generates stability and confidence, which allows investments, promoting economic growth, allowing improvement in public and private services to society, improving well-being and the satisfaction of basic needs, which feeds back security – basically strengthening the security-development linkage.

In order to achieve this cycle, military and police action were based on a triple coordinated effort of confrontation, social action, and specialized anti-narcotics action. As coordination grows in relevance within security forces, the Armed Forces installed a Doctrine of Integral Action (DAI), a military and police doctrine of joint action alongside the entire security apparatus of the State and its partners (Colombia, 2007).

In 2011, cease-fire and peace accords negotiations with FARC began. From there on, the Colombian Armed Forces invested even more in joint action doctrines, emphasizing the multidimensional aspect of security in the *Espada de Honor* plan. With the military victory over the FARC well established, these Plans focused military strategy in continuously dismantling terrorist activities (political violence), yet aiming to hinder its associated routine activities that either sponsor or collaborate with it. Those came to be named Criminal Bands (BACRIM), involved with “drug trafficking, micro-trafficking, illegal mining, extortion, contraband and high jacking” (Colombia, 2012, p.16).

These plans were coordinated alongside the *Corazón Verde* initiatives. Those were a specific National Police strategy, aimed at improving relations between police officers and the population to strengthen the institutional framework of the organization through social media, assistance programs and communication and resilience-building for local leaderships, as well as the ability to anticipate and prevent criminal activities through Community Surveillance (Colombia, 2012, p.24).

During this period, the Colombian Armed Forces gradually invested towards a multi-mission profile (Dos Santos Filho and Carreño, 2020), in which the Defense sector organizes itself around eight complementary areas: public security, national defense, coexistence and citizen security, risk and disaster management, international cooperation, protection of the environment and natural resources, promotion of development, and development of strategic projects (projective development). All forces went through a modernization and adaptation project to be better equipped and ready to meet challenges in all areas, further emphasizing the virtuous cycle perspective (Colombia, 2016). In addition, in this context, Colombia grows closer to other multilateral forums, such as the OECD, Inter-American Development Bank, and the United Nations, firming compromises to increase military and police engagement in its peace operations. Finally, after the peace accords came through in 2017, it seems that the military is sustaining this multi-mission profile (Dos Santos Filho and Carreño, 2020), and interestingly, Colombia's military expertise has been globally circulating as a success story (Viana, 2022).

3.2. Brazil

During the 1990s, Brazil went through a process of democratization that entailed: a) withdrawing the Armed Forces from political decision-making spheres; and b) re-defining the military purposes. Despite institutional changes, the military maintained its autonomy and an ambiguous constitutional prerogative to engage domestically to ensure law and order when those are perceived to be under threat.

The grey area surrounding this legal article has been the source of many debates. Specialized authors understand that the military demanded this breach to keep its former role as national security's permanent agents, not as interested in performing police activities on the streets (Mathias and Guzzi, 2010). However, due to

international agendas – as we have seen in Colombia – increasingly calling for more national efforts towards curbing organized crime, trafficking, and after 9/11, terrorism, the Brazilian Armed Forces and political elites compromised in engaging the military as ostensive police efforts under the so-called “Law and Order Guarantee Operations” (GLO, in the original), which were supposed to be of exceptional use.

Nevertheless, from 2001 onwards, these operations *shape-shifted* to accommodate almost all sorts of domestic military actions and even the previously agreed exceptional use, there have been over 140 of them since 1996 – and they are now a constitutive part of military missions. Legally, GLOs are regulated by Decree 3897 (2001), which establishes guidelines for the employment of the Armed Forces as an equivalent of a police force. Nonetheless, it was only in 2013 that the Armed Forces and the Ministry of Defense published a Manual detailing and defining the larger goals and rules for overall GLOs, and, moreover, what could be conceived as threats in this context

- a) actions against the holding of elections affecting voting and counting of votes; b) actions of criminal organizations against people or property including Brazilian flag vessels and oil and gas platforms on the Brazilian continental shelf; c) blocking of public roads; d) depredation of public and private property e) urban disturbances; f) invasion of rural or urban, public or private properties and facilities; g) shutdown of productive activities; h) shutdown of critical or essential services to the population or to the productive sectors of the country; i) sabotage at the sites of major events; and j) looting of commercial establishments. (Brasil, 2013)

In the 2010s, these operations skyrocketed in number and broadened in scope. First, a few of them shifted into Pacification operations during the public security program in Rio de Janeiro named Pacification Police Unity (UPPs, in the original). There are many

critics¹ of this program because of its lack of efficiency, strategic planning, and an increased violence that reinforces racist bias and police brutality.

The purpose of these unities was to establish control over the *favelas* to tackle organized crime and drug trafficking, and invest in statebuilding, providing a socialization model that would inhibit young adults and children from joining crime (Rio de Janeiro, 2015). The military engagement in these operations is very similar to GLOs, as well as peace operations. Brazil has unparalleled experience in commanding military officers in stabilization missions among South American countries due to its leading role in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). The Pacification Manual (Brasil, 2015) states that this engagement can happen externally, as it did in MINUSTAH, or internally.

Internal pacification occurs when there are threats (potential or manifested) to public order and/or international peace, and the military is to “provide a safe and stable environment; protect the population, assets, and critical infrastructure; meet the critical needs of the population; win the support of public opinion; and restore the institutional environment for development” (Brasil, 2015, p.24). Pacification operations are even more tangibly related to counterinsurgency, as they are actively attempting to curb what is perceived to be public disturbance and social groups through ostensive policing and localized military action followed by long-term development measures. Listed as activities to be delivered by the military are: supporting public works projects and initiatives that generate immediate employment, fostering the participation of financial agencies that provide loans and incentives for small businesses in legitimate commerce, encouraging the creation of micro-enterprises, and allowing the development of financial institutions (Brasil, 2015, p.44-45).

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1 One of those critics was Marielle Franco, murdered in 2018 while Rio de Janeiro was the theater of the Federal Intervention.

Yet another increase in GLOs was due the international events that took place in Brazil – Olympics, World Cup and others. As these events stressed the international concern on terrorism and violence associated with organized crime that may harm tourism and urban life in general, the military acquired high-levels of autonomy in planning public security strategies, implementing surveillance mechanism – such as the *Pacifying Program* –, activating control and command centers throughout the territory, as well as increasing its QRBN and ISTAR capabilities, also investing on technological artifacts such as UAVs to assist policing and patrolling cities and borders (Brasil, 2018).

The Brazilian military also engages in routine social-civic actions explicitly related to GLOs and stabilization missions, as they are designed to be educational instruments that are deemed to adjust civil and military authority over the population (Brasil, 2009). Much like standard counterinsurgency measures, these civic-actions call for a hearts and minds approach, as they ought “to discourage or weaken support by community members for activities that are illicit or contrary to interests of the Nation or the Armed Forces” (Brasil, 2009, p.9). The actions do not use classic coercion, yet there is a) a coercive aspect to them, giving that it is the military presence over civilians; and b) a coordinative dimension between civic-actions and these other forms of domestic engagement, something that the Armed Forces have also been learning by engaging in UN operations and NATO proximity through their civil-military coordination and cooperation doctrines (Santos and Siman, 2022).

Furthermore, in 2018, an unprecedented form of military engagement took place as a Federal Intervention was launched to tackle the public security crisis in Rio de Janeiro, having its entire chain of command occupied by Army officers. The military claimed that only its organizational skills, professionalism and political neutrality could provide the efficiency required to reform the public security structures and reduce the crime rates (Brasil, 2019).

In these later years, we note that GLOs decreased in numbers, yet these larger operations grew. In the Amazon region, for instance, environmental crimes, land conflicts with indigenous communities and migration crisis bolstered broad operations such as Operação Acolhida and Verde Brasil, placing the Armed Forces as strategic planners to manage logistics and coordination with little to none use of actual lethal force, but relying heavy on the military's administrative abilities acquired in its professionalization process (Marini, Janot, and Freixo, 2022).

Final remarks

By providing this overall description of domestic military engagement in Brazilian and Colombian democracies, we have attempted to demonstrate how force has continually been used over – and against – their own population through practice. We have presented the alternative interpretations of security, the military/police divide and how violence is organized in liberal regimes to further stress its artificiality, which does not entail accepting the domestic use of the military or the ostensive use of police forces as inevitable measures ought to be taken for security's stake.

On the contrary, we have addressed Marxists and political sociology critiques to further stress the peril these usages represent for populations. While we agree that the modern State and the capitalism system have an inherent need for pacification – hence, to use its coercive apparatus to fabricate social order and to keep accumulation functioning – we highlighted that the Armed Forces – our main source of analysis – as the professional corps specialized in organizing violence have unique means of *producing* security and, in doing so, they create their own forms of engagement. Surely, the military are not the sole actors responsible for contemporary predicaments. They are also constrained and influenced by a myriad

of issues, including tensions within the security field itself. However, considering South America's history of military participation and the global tendencies exposed, they should also be analyzed as active, leading agents.

For Colombia, the Armed Forces kept a straightforward domestic counterinsurgency-counterterrorism strategy in political synchrony with the civilian administration and U.S. assistance, expanding – as the conflict and “post” conflict scenes developed – into multiple capabilities for broader, long-term pacification actions that places the military in the global scene. In Brazil, military and civil-authority relations were more erratic, yet most of the described forms of domestic engagement were instated within normal procedures, and while they did not follow a clearly designed pacification strategy, they can be seen as an adaptation process through which sporadically deflagrated operations in the 1990s gradually turned into large-scale military interventions where the military is seen – both by its self-image and by society – as a strategic planner and crisis-manager because of its expertise.

Despite their differences, both countries' political notions of what – and who – ought to be protected and what – and who – needs to be controlled, contained, and curbed remain grounded on authoritarian perspectives that the population itself is a locus of possible threats because of the military's own practices of threat assessment and lingering counterinsurgency strategies and tactics. This can be a harrowing conclusion, as global tendencies in the security field seem to heighten these very same issues, yet it can also call forth the shift we ought to perhaps pursue, that is to think and seek the qualities embedded in sustainable development goals, such as peace, *beyond* security – and even perhaps, *beyond* development.

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9.

GENDER AND SECURITY: PERSPECTIVES FROM SOUTH AMERICA



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Introduction

GENDER PERSPECTIVES AND FEMINIST THEORIES HAVE proliferated in International Security Studies (ISS) from



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the 1980s onwards. In this context, the field experienced a “double movement”: both expansion and deepening of theories and debates. According to Buzan and Hansen (2009), feminist approaches (as well as other theoretical perspectives) developed as an unfolding of the Peace Research program (subfield that would later be called Peace Studies) in this period. As the Cold War ended, academics and political institutions began to focus their reflections on broader themes and problems rather than on tactical issues of interstate disputes, such as gender equality in international politics, the impacts of wars on women’s lives and bodies and their role in the context of armed conflict.

The emergence of fresh theoretical perspectives, besides reflecting new perceptions of security issues, also influenced the reformulation of the concept of international security, expanding it beyond a state-centric and militaristic approach. Feminist theories, as well as the Critical Security Studies, offered a change in the object of reference (what or who should be secured), from the state to the individual; and feminists brought women to the center of analysis. As stated by Buzan and Hansen (2009, p.211): “What a feminist expansion of the referent object revealed was that women’s security problems were privatized, marginalized or even silenced, and that their deaths were validated differently from that of military men’s, not that men were not threatened”.

The expansion of debates on gender and women and security has also stimulated, as well as influenced, the development of international policies and mechanisms. One of the milestones for feminist studies was the elaboration of Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security by the United Nations Security Council in 2000. This resolution was followed by other ten that aim to shed light on the violence suffered by women in armed conflicts and encourage states to adopt a gender perspective in conflict prevention and resolution, especially regarding the role of women as agents at the peace negotiation tables (UN Women, 2020).

In 2015, the member states of the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the result of a two-year process of negotiations and participation of organizations and sectors from civil society, the private sector, and governments. The Agenda has 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and more than 100 global action goals to be achieved by the year 2030. SDG 5 seeks to encourage countries to achieve “gender equality”, an element considered essential for the economic development of all nations. Furthermore, this objective highlights a concern about sexual violence and exploitation of women and girls and the need for greater attention to the impacts of environmental crises and armed conflict on the lives of women and children (United Nations Development Programme, 2021).

The development of these policies on women, gender, and security contributed to the expansion of feminist debates and gender studies in the field of International Relations (IR) and, more specifically, in ISS, which seek to understand and assess their importance. In addition, there are also works, from different theoretical perspectives and analytical approaches, which offer a critical and contesting look at these policies. In most cases, the policies ignore the ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic differences of women around the world and reproduce stereotyped ideas about masculinities and femininities. Shepherd (2008), for example, adopted a poststructuralist feminist perspective to analyze Resolution 1325. According to the author, this and other resolutions of the Peace, Women and Security Agenda assume a restricted concept of gender that is equal to biological sex, which ends up reproducing an image of women only as victims in conflict contexts (Shepherd, 2008).

However, these criticisms are not recent. Since the mid-1980s, post-colonial theorist Chandra Mohanty has addressed the problem of the representation of “Third World” women in hegemonic and colonial discourses – and, furthermore, reproduced by women in the Western world. Even before that, black feminists (such as

Angela Davis, bell hooks and Lélia Gonzalez) shed light on racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic differences between women and, with that, addressed the limits and gaps of feminist movements built by Eurocentric white women. In a similar way, the theorists of Decolonial Feminism have denounced and analyzed, for decades, the different oppressions experienced by Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and “non-white” women, which are reinforced and justified by the effects of colonization and capitalism (Dominguez et al., 2021).

Considering the breadth of theoretical perspectives and possible analytical approaches in studies on gender, women, and international security, this chapter analyzes academic productions on this topic published in South American journals between 2016 and 2021. The objective is to reflect on the lines of research currently present in South America that address International Security topics from a feminist and/or gender perspective. Considering the influence and predominance of North Global analyses and theories in the field of International Relations, we seek to investigate whether there is an epistemological and ontological rupture in the works recently published in South American countries. For this purpose, only articles published from 2016 onwards will be analyzed. In addition to being the initial year of the 2030 Agenda, this period allows sufficient time span to provide an overview of current academic production in the region.

Three central questions guide the analysis of the productions: a) “Is there a focus on regional issues and problems?”, b) “Does the research work with decolonial and postcolonial theories?”, and c) “Is there an autonomous thinking in the analysis of local issues?”. To answer these questions and achieve the main objective, the chapter is divided into four topics, in addition to this Introduction and the Conclusion. In the first section, the methodology used in the collection and analysis of the articles is explained. Then, some of the main discussions and contributions of feminist and gender theories

to the field of International Relations and, particularly, to International Security Studies are presented.

In the third section, a descriptive analysis of academic articles collected from academic journals in South America is carried out. Based on this analysis, it is possible, in the last section, to answer the three questions presented above. With this, the overview of recent South American academic production on international security issues is elaborated based on the studies of gender and/or feminism.

Methodology

The research is designed from a qualitative perspective that aims to look at the academic productions published in the leading South American journals. An analytical selection of sources was carried out from indexing platforms of scientific journals, thus maintaining high quality criteria for the productions to be analyzed throughout the chapter. Specialized journals from different countries in the field of International Relations and related fields of Social Sciences, Feminist and Gender Studies were selected.

For the selection of journals, the *Redalyc* Scientific Information System¹ and the Online Regional Information System for Scientific Journals from Latin America, the Caribbean, Spain, and Portugal (*Latindex*)² were used. Considering the “advanced search” option, filters were applied to find the journals in both systems. On *Redalyc*, the search parameters were country³ and discipline⁴ (publication

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- 1 The *Redalyc* database has 1,456 online journals from 25 countries, totalizing 739,711 academic articles.
- 2 On *Latindex*, there are 11,911 academic journals registered online.
- 3 The analysis focuses specifically on Spanish-speaking countries and Brazil, totalling ten countries.
- 4 Fields of concentration vary by country. The main ones were: Social Sciences, Multidisciplinary (Social Sciences), International Relations, and Politics.

focus field). In the case of *Latindex*, the parameters were: current journals (currently in circulation), with peer review and open access, and located in South America.

Then, a second selection was made in each journal by choosing works published between 2016 and 2021. At this stage, the software Publish or Perish was used to conduct a specific search within the journals available on the Google Scholar database. To search for articles, the International Standard Serial Number (ISSN), the name of the journal, and the following combination of keywords were indicated:

1. ("gender" AND "international security") OR ("feminism" AND "international security")
2. ("gender violence" AND "international security") OR "gender violence"
3. "women" AND "international security"

These combinations made it possible to track the productions that are at the intersection of international security and gender and/or feminism. The Boolean operators (AND and OR) were applied according to the instruction manual of the software. Since most of the articles are published in Spanish, Portuguese and English, we chose search constructs and keywords in the three languages, thus controlling linguistic variation during the search.

It is worth noting that International Relations is not a consolidated field within all countries in the region. Therefore, many of them do not have canonical journals dedicated to the field or themes related to gender studies. Likewise, not all of them have journals specialized in the issue of gender and international security. Given this difficulty, the scope of journals was expanded, including those on studies linked to the Social Sciences or journals of a multidisciplinary nature.

Once the search filters of the software Publish or Perish were applied to the journals, which were mapped using *Redalyc* and

Latindex websites, it was possible to determine the following data: the total number of countries (7), the total number of journals (29), and the total number of publications (75). The countries are: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela.

Feminisms in International Relations

The universe of social sciences has witnessed the emergence of a series of political and philosophical strands contained in what we can currently call feminism. Strands ranging from divisions focused on ontological and epistemological premises (e.g., empiricist, standpoint, postmodern feminism) to those derived from their political-theoretical implications (e.g., liberal, critical, constructivist, postcolonial, decolonial) show the breadth of new agendas and analytical instruments that have been consolidated over the years (Whitworth, 1994). Despite the differences, feminisms have common principles that aspire to achieve the same rights for men and women in political, social, economic, sexual, and intellectual spheres (Narain, 2014).

The critical immersion of feminism in IR can be seen in three generations of studies. A first generation of feminist researchers dedicated themselves to rethinking dominant concepts in the field such as state, power, security, sovereignty, anarchy, mainly questioning their apparent neutrality. Until then, the state was considered an entity projected in the figure of the modern and rational man in constant search for power. Feminism unveiled these concepts by offering a fresh look at biased productions, such as Kenneth Waltz's *Man, the State, and War* (1959), an important work of structural realism. This is just one example of how international politics is often portrayed as masculine.

The incorporation of gender as an analytical framework was another key element for the development of feminism in IR. In

order to locate women and observe inequalities in the international system, feminist researchers announced that global politics was hierarchically *gendered* (Sjoberg, 2009). In other words, gender orders, in the male and female binary sense, were a central part of the power structure, making it impossible to fully understand phenomena such as war and violence (Prügl and Tickner, 2018).

In response to the demands of making the presence of women visible in different spaces of power, scholars mostly concentrated in the Global North, formulated methodologies in opposition to traditional approaches. Jill Steans (1998, p.5), for example, formulated a gender lens to “focus on the everyday experiences of women as women and highlight the consequences of their unequal social position”. Similarly, Cynthia Enloe, in her classic work *Bananas, Beaches and Bases* (1990), announces the use of a gendered bottom-up approach that starts from the basic social structures to locate the women who inhabit the margins of international politics, and thus examine how they influence and are influenced by it. With the help of these approaches, the abyssal lines among the individual, the political, and the international levels have been continually eroding.

A second generation of feminists addressed international relations from a more critical perspective. With the so-called *Third Debate*, post-positivism paved the way for more specific studies, ignoring the universalist and objective claims of certain theories. Feminism thus identified that the category of woman could not be understood as a universal axis either. Intersectionality denounced power relations and oppressions that affect women differently according to their ethnic, class, and even geographic conditions (Tickner and Sjoberg, 2017). The third generation shows a breadth of debates and unfolding of the concept of gender. Studies related to masculinities have been applied to subfields of IR such as international security studies, showing the close alliances between masculinities and militarism. Other studies have been developed from

international political economy and approaches dedicated to the queer theory (Prügl and Tickner, 2018), the latter being the maximum expression of the overflow of gender issues.

Gender and feminism in International Security Studies

Debates related to the specific topic of International Security, a canonical subfield of IR, continue to be the central axis when gender perspectives are incorporated. This is a result of the urgency to understand not only the causes of conflicts and wars between states, but also the consequences of these events on the individual's life. As previously argued, the study of international phenomena is not sufficiently attentive to gender issues due to the apparent gender neutrality of modern scientific thought.

Feminist gender perspectives have introduced the social component of the concept of gender as an element resulting from asymmetrical power relations. The masculine and the feminine are the gender categories that underlie the production of social roles, norms, and behaviors for men and women. With a concept that denotes the social construction of the identities and performativity of individuals, the sexual and biological element based on obsolete understandings of human behavior is abandoned, and the subjective, historical, and symbolic construction of human beings is widened (Runyan and Peterson, 2014; West and Zimmerman, 1987). The role of gender in the formation of identities is fundamental not only for individuals, but also for institutions and political practices.

Thus, feminist gender studies broadened the analytical scope of security studies and introduced previously disregarded parameters to understand issues such as the presence of women in wars throughout history (Elshtain, 2005; Tickner, 1992); the role of women as perpetrators of violence (Sjoberg and Gentry, 2007); and studies supported by postmodern critical perspectives that stress subjective and discursive spaces as territories for the dispute of meanings present

in the formation of social and, consequently, institutional identities (Shepherd, 2006; Solhjell, 2015). Some studies, linked to the latter group, deal with the National Action Plans of the UN Women, Peace and Security Agenda; women's participation in peace operations; women's role in the negotiation of armed conflicts, among other themes.

The analyses that surround the issue of war have been quite revealing when it comes to incorporating gender perspectives. War still occupies a large part of the social imaginary as a natural activity of men (Tickner, 1988). Therefore, placing women and people with different gender identities in the barracks is still a task made difficult by the erroneous belief that war is a male activity, and that this masculinity is an exclusive biological attribute of men (Sylvester, 2015).

As a result, the historical role of women has been left aside in important events such as the French Revolution, the independence processes in Latin American countries, the Civil War, the Russian Revolution, the two world wars of the 20th century, the Gulf wars, among others. For that reason, there is a debt of historical injustice in the recognition of women's participation in political, intellectual, and military action and their contributions to the history of humanity (Elshtain, 2005).

Feminist projects have also had a positive impact on the formulation of subfields of study related to men and masculinities. This development of the research contributes to the understanding of phenomena hitherto limited to a gender perspective restricted to a binary and dichotomous logic between masculine and feminine. Again, feminism itself shows a good deal of self-criticism by suggesting that the dynamics of the world, distributed between oscillating masculine and feminine behaviors, were insufficient. Therefore, masculinities have become an increasingly attractive study factor for the analysis of issues related to the international security field.

Studies on masculinities date back to at least the 1950s. In International Relations, the study of masculinities has arisen from the

studies on gender as an explanatory factor of power relations in societies – as we have seen so far. The concept of hegemonic masculinity has been rethought and reformulated to bring contingent elements of history and places where this type of masculinity manifests itself, making it possible to understand it in a plural, contingent and variable sense (Connell, 2005). New concepts have emerged, such as “masculine nostalgia” and “frustrated masculinity” (Mackenzie and Foster, 2017), strongly connected to conflict scenarios in which other masculinities, especially the militarized ones (Eichler, 2014), overlap previously prevailing standards.

Consequently, the predominance of male superiority in these locations was affected by the international transit of soldiers and soldiers who act as agents of peace or new agents of violence. Other concepts such as “positive masculinities” and “alternative masculinities” have also gained prominence. They transform the negative component of masculinity by modifying men’s behavior, and thus making them protagonists on the path to peace and equality (Iglesias, Urrutxi, and Arizti, 2021).

In addition to theoretical production in the field, International Relations have gained epistemological representation in locations identified as the margins of the world. Emerging Global South epistemologies place the subjects of knowledge who inhabit the realm of “the other side of the line” at the center of the debate. “The other side of the line” is a place created by the modern, patriarchal, and colonial thinking, which is an abyssal thinking. It represents the realities of colonial territories that are nonexistent “under the Western eyes” (Santos, 2007; Mohanty, 1984). The feminist perspectives mentioned above are part of the process of making subaltern and oppressed subjects visible. However, they are often insufficient to understand the realities of women and individuals from Global South. This gap is filled by postcolonial and decolonial feminist theories that intersect issues of race, gender, ethnicity, and class to understand the oppressions inherited from the

colonial legacy. The colonialities of power (Quijano, 2009) and gender (Lugones, 2008; Segato, 2012) are, therefore, the pillars of a critical, localized thinking that seeks to explain the South American realities. Through the knowledge of the oppressed, we seek to locate the productions on international security and gender present in South American debates.

The production of knowledge about gender and security in South America

This section aims to develop the analysis of academic productions compiled from the methodological resources previously announced. Table 1 presents an overview of the number of countries (7) and the distribution of the number of journals (29), and publications (75).

TABLE 1 – SORTING OF JOURNALS AND PUBLICATIONS BY COUNTRY

Country	Number of journals	Number of publications
Argentina	2	2
Bolivia	1	1
Brazil	8	28
Chile	2	2
Colombia	12	36
Ecuador	3	4
Venezuela	1	2
Total	29	75

Source: prepared by the authors.

Starting with Argentina, two journals were found, each one of them with an academic article in the field of International Security with a gender/feminist focus. The first one was *Revista de Estudios de Género: Zona Franca* (Universidad Nacional de Rosario) with an

article on the representation of women as victims in peace negotiations in Colombia. The second work, from the journal *Miríada: Investigación in Ciencias Sociales* (Universidad del Salvador), deals with the Korean Council, a leading body in addressing issues such as the coercion of women into sex slavery by Imperial Japan on the agenda of the international community. Both works, although not explicitly, make use of “gender lenses”, in other words, they seek to shed light on the realities experienced by women. However, they do not employ decolonial feminist perspectives.

As announced in the introduction to this section, journals do not necessarily correspond to the field of International Relations. However, they approach topics overlooked in IR journals, especially regarding themes that address gender perspectives in the field of International Security. It is worth mentioning that the journal *Relaciones Internacionales* (Institute of International Relations of Universidad Nacional de La Plata) is a leading journal in the field. Nevertheless, no academic articles published on the topic itself were found. The only references were presentation documents that were not considered in this study because they did not fit the peer review requirements – indicated in the methodological section.

In Bolivian journals, only one article was selected, “Mujeres guaraníes, violencia sexual y búsqueda de justicia”, written by Mariel Paz Ramírez and published in *Revista Boliviana de Ciencias Sociales T'inkazos* in 2016. Through a decolonial perspective, the author investigates the effects of colonization and patriarchy in cases of sexual violence against women and girls of the Guaraní ethnic group in the Bolivian Chaco region. Based on that, the judgment processes of such cases were analyzed, including the one by indigenous justice.

Brazil is the second country with the highest number of publications (28), distributed in eight academic journals. It is important to sort the journals to proceed with this analysis. Two groups can be identified, each of them with four journals. The first includes those related to themes of gender and feminisms with an interdisciplinary

approach: *Revista Estudos Feministas* (Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina), *Cadernos Pagu* (Universidade Estadual de Campinas), *Revista Ártemis* (Universidade Federal da Paraíba), and *Revista Feminismos* (Universidade Federal da Bahia).

Starting with the journals with the fewest publications, *Revista Feminismos* has two works: one on the femicide of indigenous women in Canada, and another on activism to end violence against women. They were elaborated from a descriptive and an exploratory approach, respectively. *Revista Ártemis* also has two articles. In the first one, the authors attempt to carry out a post-colonial feminist analysis of female genital mutilation in Africa (Olegário and Corbellini, 2017). The second production, on the other hand, deals with the women's agency in the peace process in Somalia. The authors carry out an analysis of this participation in the light of post-colonial, African and Islamic feminisms (Morais, 2019).

The two remaining journals are widely known in Brazilian academia. The *Revista Estudos Feministas* gathers a series of productions focused on the field of International Security. Among them, four articles that deal with peace operations and, mainly, women as agents in wars and armed conflicts stand out. One of these works, on the problem of sexual abuse, uses feminism to understand the conditions that led to the perpetration of acts of sexual violence by UN peacekeepers in Haiti (Toledo and Braga, 2020). The article focuses mostly on the analysis of militarized masculinities and does not employ decolonial perspectives. Another three works address issues related to war, such as the case of Brazilian women's role in the First World War (Rocha, 2020); the role of women in armed conflicts on the international agenda (Matuella, 2017); and the gendering process of the "war on terror" that contributes to the depoliticization of the gender concept in debates on international security (Telles, 2017).

Cadernos Pagu journal has four articles. Three of them discuss gender violence in different contexts, the first referring to the trafficking of Dominican women in Puerto Rico (Cabezas, 2016);

followed by a work on the repression of homosexuals in the dictatorial periods of Cuba and Brazil (Pinheiro, 2018); and the third addressing the violence suffered by LGBTQIA+ refugees in Brazil and Spain (França, 2017). The fourth work explores the connection between wars and soldier girls. The author focuses her analysis on the construction of the victim's image (Martuscelli, 2019). It is noteworthy that, in the four works, the gender category is not used as an analytical perspective, but as an element of identification of groups of women and LGBTQIA+.

There is also a second group of Brazilian journals that are characterized by bringing articles pertaining exclusively to International Relations: *Monções: International Relations Journal of the Federal University of Grande Dourados*; *RBPI – Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional* (Universidade de Brasília); *Revista Contexto Internacional* (Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro); and *Conjuntura Austral: Journal of the Global South* (Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul).

RBPI and *Contexto Internacional* are journals of high national and international prestige and have followed the development of the discipline in the country. In the first, it was found an article that addresses the situation of migrant women from the Northern Triangle of Central America and their experiences of violence in the transit process and how to prevent them. *Contexto Internacional*, on the other hand, has five articles, and three of them reflect on the classic themes of security. The first article assesses the involvement of women in the Colombian peace process, highlighting their role in promoting peace on social media (Henshaw, 2020). The second article discusses the gender representations in America's "war on drugs" discourses in Latin America (Telles, 2019). The third article addresses the Kurdish women's resistance movement as part of the nationalist struggle project, operating in northern Syria and in some regions of Turkey (Ferreira and Santiago, 2018).

The last two works have particularities. Both address matters associated with security issues, although this is not the focus. Drawing from a gender perspective, one of the articles aims to analyze the connection between migration and practices such as prostitution, sex work, and human trafficking. To this end, the author problematizes postmodern feminism to understand this complex connection, beyond the use of dichotomies present in Global North perspectives, such as passivity/agency and vulnerability/empowerment (Valadier, 2018). Finally, the second work is dedicated to refugee flows in Europe and analyzes media narratives that the authors call “representations of the South in the North”. They explore how these images are constructed as racialized and gendered, and how they affect securitization processes in Europe (Santos, Roque, and Santos, 2018).

The journals *Monções* and *Conjuntura Austral* have four publications each. The *Monções* papers consist of studies on decolonial feminism that reflect on violence in the Global South (Minvielle, 2019); cases of sexual exploitation perpetrated by UN peacekeepers (Martuscelli and Rinaldi, 2017); the problem of the “war on drugs” and its impact on the intersection of class, race, and gender in Brazil (Fernandes, 2020); and the participation of women in peace negotiations in Colombia (Minillo et al., 2017).

Lastly, the journal *Conjuntura Austral* has four articles. The first assesses the insertion of Brazilian military women in the current century (Neumann and Pagliari, 2021). The second article addresses a topic that is not fully explored in the literature: the implementation of the National Action Plans (NAPs), derived from the UN Women, Peace and Security agenda, from 2000 onwards. In this case, the author carries out a study on the implementation of these plans in the South American context (Schewether, 2020). The last two works have the cases of femicide in Latin America as a common thread. This subject has been extensively addressed by academic articles in the region (Aguirre, 2021; Villarroel and Castaño, 2021).

The Chilean case presented two publications linked to two journals: *Estudios Internacionales* (Universidad de Chile) and *Si Somos Americanos* (Universidad Arturo Prat). Regarding the first journal, the publication deals with crimes of sexual violence, genocide, and attacks on women's human rights. Although the work is more directed towards the field of International Law, this type of article is representative of the narrow disciplinary boundaries that surround international security and other fields of knowledge (Torrecuadrada García-Lozano, 2018). The second publication examines the role of women in *maras*⁵ in Central American countries. Considering the uncontrolled problem of delinquency in the so-called Northern Triangle of Central America (Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador), security issues cross the borders of these countries, generating regional concern. Furthermore, women, in addition to recognizing their role in wars and in the Armed Forces, act in different ways in these groups and are impacted by the violent practices present in them (Sampó, 2016).

In Colombia, the country with the highest number of publications (36), articles were collected in 12 academic journals. The journals with the largest number of publications were *Eleuthera* (Universidad de Caldas) and *Nómadas* (Universidad Central) with seven articles each. Concerning the first one, these articles were published in the same volume edited in 2018. Among them, only one does not address the Colombian context: it is the article by Zarco-Ortiz (2018) on the violence experienced by transsexual migrant women in Central America. The remaining five investigate Colombia and discuss a proposal to deconstruct the image of women as victims, through postcolonial and decolonial feminist perspectives (Revollo-Pardo, 2018); the denunciation of the violence perpetrated against women during the conflict (Arias-Rodríguez, 2018;

|||||||

5 Organized groups of young delinquents.

Silva-Falcão, 2018); the experiences of young women in the armed struggle (Niño-Vega, 2018); and a review of the literature on gender and sexuality in the context of the armed conflict (Giraldo-Aguirre, 2018). Finally, the article published in 2020, by Correa-Delgado, highlights the importance of peasant feminism to analyze the role of women in peacebuilding.

When it comes to the seven articles published in *Nómadas*, four of them address the Colombian context and three deal with other contexts. In the latter, an article examines the resistance of indigenous women trafficked for sexual exploitation on the Brazil-Colombia-Peru triple border from a decolonial and community feminism point of view (Taüchina, Forero, and Rodríguez, 2021); one investigates the resistance of Laotian refugee women in Latin America, taking their aesthetic practices into account (Mora, 2021); and one analyzes the situation of transsexual migrant and refugee women in Chile through decolonial and intersectional feminism lenses (Galaz and Menares, 2021). The Colombia-related articles address: the continuity of violence to which women are subjected (Díaz Bonilla, 2020); the situation of women survivors of the armed conflict in the country (using Marxist feminism and decolonial feminism) (Robles Gómez, 2020); the (re)production of masculinities within armed groups (Neira Cruz and Castillo Olarte, 2020); and the activism of trans people regarding transitional justice (Epistemológico, 2020).

Four journals published three articles each: *Ánfora* (Universidad Autónoma de Manizales), *Estudios Políticos* (Universidad de Antioquia), *Revista Internacional de Cooperación y Desarrollo* (Universidad de San Buenaventura), and *Reflexión Política* (Universidad Autónoma de Bucaramanga). In the first journal, all publications have Colombia as the research setting. There is one article about female stereotypes reproduced in Colombian drug trafficking television series (Sánchez Ríos, 2017), one about militarized masculinity and the possibilities of peace reconstruction (Patiño-Gaviria et al.,

2021), and another concerning the role of women leaders in peace-building (Acosta-Navas, 2020). In the second journal, publications bring up topics such as: human rights violations of the LGBTQIA+ community in the armed conflict (Martinez, Sanchez, and Ibarra, 2021); the impact of Integral Rural Reform on women's lives in the post-conflict period (Botero Blandón and Serrano Ávila, 2021); and the possibilities of gender analysis in organized violence scenarios (Garrido Ortolá, 2021).

In the third journal, two publications address the women's participation and their situation in the post-conflict period (Cruz and Jordán, 2021; Mattos, 2018) and one is about the insertion of a gender perspective in risk management actions in Brazil within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals and the SDGs (Fernández and Dema, 2018). In the fourth journal, two articles discuss the Colombian context: a gender-focused analysis of forced displacement and the peace agreement (Vos Obeso and Gutierrez Gonzalez, 2018) and one about the experiences of female FARC ex-combatants in the post-conflict period (Ruiz Herrera and Huertas Díaz, 2019). Lastly, there is an article that employs a discourse analysis to investigate the representation of women in English-speaking Arab media after the September 11 terrorist attacks (Lida and Avoine, 2016).

In another four Colombian journals, two works were found in each of them. *Revista Científica General José María Córdova* (Escuela Militar de Cadetes "General José María Córdova") has an article that, from a liberal feminist perspective, addresses the issue of sexual violence in the United Nations peacekeeping operation in the Central African Republic (Villarreal et al., 2019), and another that aims to describe the international rights guaranteed to women victims of the conflict in Colombia (Atencio Gómez, 2020). In *Revista CS* (Universidad Icesi), the articles were: a decolonial feminist investigation of prostitution during the Colombian armed conflict (Gallego-Montes, 2020), and a hermeneutic historical approach to the

situation of the LGBTI community victim of forced displacement (Castaño-Aguirre, 2020).

Two articles about the Colombian armed conflict were collected from *Revista Via Iuris* (Fundación Universitaria Los Libertadores). One of them focuses on male sexual victimization. For this analysis, the authors worked with the concept of masculinity (Puerto-Gutiérrez and Vega-Perez, 2020). In the other, the authors analyze the resistance of women during the conflict, dialoguing with authors of decolonial feminism (Mancilla Bautista, Montealegre, and Rojas, 2020). In contrast, the *Revista de Estudios Sociales* (Universidad de los Andes), was the only one that did not present articles on Colombia. In one publication, the author brings up the cases of violence against Mapuche women, with contributions from postcolonial and decolonial feminisms (Vera Gajardo, 2018). In the other, the author investigates the trafficking of women for prostitution in North America (Izcara Palacios, 2018).

Finally, in the journals *Desafíos* (Universidad de Rosario) and *Colombia Internacional* (Universidad de los Andes) one article was collected in each one of them. In the first journal, there is an article in which the authors used a gender approach to investigate the role of emotions in the reconciliation of victims in the post-Colombian conflict (Peltier-Bonneau and Szwarcberg, 2019). In the second one, the article by Castaño Torres, Acevedo Valencia and Londoño Martínez (2020) analyzed the experiences of ex-guerrilla women in Colombia from different feminist approaches.

Moving on to the Ecuadorian case, three journals were found: *URVIO*, *Latin American Journal of Security Studies*, and *ÍCONOS*. Their focus is on the social sciences, and they are linked to Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO). The third one, edited by the Instituto de Altos Estudios Nacionales (IAEN), is the *Estado & comunes*, journal of public policies and problems. The three add up to four articles.

The only selected article published in *URVIO* deals with feminist studies on international security, mainly questioning the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the redefinition of threats (Leone and Caballero, 2021). The journal *ÍCONOS*, also with a single publication, brings the situation of *Me'phaa* women facing the problem of mining and drug trafficking to the debate on gender and international security. The study uses a community feminist perspective and an ethnographic approach to understand the gender violence faced by these women (Aguilar, 2019). In addition, the journal *Estado & comunes* has two publications, one related to the problem of femicide and misogyny in the public space, a study based on the analysis of international documents on the subject, and the other on the incorporation of Ecuadorian women in the Armed Forces (Orbe, 2016). This last work is of great importance in the literature on international security due to the growing concern regarding the entry of women into the Armed Forces in South American countries and, in the Ecuadorian case, due to the gender policies implemented from 2013 onwards, a subject not yet sufficiently analyzed.

Finally, two articles were collected from *Procesos Históricos* (Escuela de Historia de la Universidad de Los Andes), a Venezuelan academic journal. Both suggest an analysis of women as active agents in the context of armed insurrections and wars of independence in the 19th century. The first of them recovered the history of female participation in the federations' rebellions during the process of centralization of the Argentine state (Fachin, 2019). The second article addresses the participation of three Afro-Cuban women in the war for Cuba's independence from Spanish rule. Taking aspects such as race, gender, and socioeconomic status into consideration, the author carried out historiographical research (Chichester, 2020).

Research agenda and theoretical perspectives of South American publications

The analysis of academic productions by country indicates that some locations, themes, and theoretical perspectives are recurrent in the region. Starting with the localities, Colombia is the object of investigation of a considerable number of articles. Among the 75 articles found, 26 are based on the reality experienced by the country, particularly considering the scenarios of (post-)armed conflict. This indicates the existence of a growing literature directly concerned with understanding the conflict and the peace process from gender and feminist perspectives, which denounce the asymmetries of power present in these militarized spaces.

It is also noted that the largest number of productions on the Colombian theme has been published in journals in the same country. The publications examine the violence experienced by women and men during and after the armed conflict, mainly as a result of forced displacement. Among these publications, most would fit into what is called women's studies and/or feminist studies, as they investigate women's experiences and points of view. It is observed that there is an effort of Colombian journals to deconstruct the image of women as victims in contexts of conflict. Some works reflect on the role of female leaders in the peace negotiations and in local initiatives for post-conflict reconstruction. In addition, some articles approach women as armed actors, particularly looking at the experiences of those who acted as guerrillas.

Besides the Colombian scenario, several articles published in South American journals also aim to understand the dynamics and processes of other Latin American countries or those of the region. It is noteworthy the work on trafficking of women in border regions in Central America and the Amazon; on violence against indigenous women in Bolivia and Chile; and on female participation in the Armed Forces in Brazil and Ecuador, as well as in other armed

groups, such as women in struggles for independence in Cuba. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning the research on other regions, such as North America, and even other continents. Thus, there are works on African countries (Somalia and the Central African Republic), Europe, Asia (South Korea and Japan) and the Middle East (Kurdistan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar).

The centrality of publications on Latin America, and more specifically on South America, indicates an effort to produce knowledge about the local reality. The researchers address transnational dynamics, whether investigating the performance of actors from different locations, or analyzing cross-border activities. Despite looking at the international dimension, researchers are mostly concerned with the local impact of the phenomena and/or the action of individuals, groups, and domestic institutions to overcome the challenges and scenarios of violence in the region.

With regard to the themes investigated, the main (but not exclusive) ones can be identified: a) gender violence and violence against women in contexts of armed conflict; b) female participation in peace reconstruction negotiations; c) participation of women and men in armed groups and military institutions; d) gender violence and femicides in migration and refugee contexts; e) United Nations peace operations; f) the consequences of international initiatives, such as Resolution 1325 and the SDGs; g) issues related to debates about masculinities and the LGBTQIA+ population.

As mentioned, there is an expressive number of articles that investigate the topic of gender violence and/or violence against women in the Colombian armed conflict. The researches mainly address the violations experienced by these women as a result of forced displacement and confrontations between armed groups. Moreover, other research themes discuss the implications of the war on drugs, Korean women forced to sexual slavery by Imperial Japan, and the context of gender violence in Latin America and/or the Global South. These works aim to shed light on issues

experienced by women in scenarios traditionally studied in International Security. As feminist theorists denounce, these issues are often overlooked in mainstream IR research, which focuses on confrontations between states and negotiations between government leaders.

In the same line of investigation on overlooked aspects in mainstream theories, there are works on the active participation of women in peace negotiations and in armed groups and military institutions. Regarding the first theme, the focus of many researchers on the role of women in local efforts to rebuild peace is noteworthy. Faced with the difficulty of being heard in multilateral instances and in traditional spaces of power, women create their own dialogue platforms and initiatives. In addition to breaking with the socially constructed image of women as victims, the second line of research attempts to question the patriarchal structures of organizations such as guerrillas and the Armed Forces.

Published research on migration and refuge also contributes to the expansion of International Relations studies on other realities. By bringing a gender perspective and/or attention to the experiences of (cis and trans) women, the articles address issues such as human trafficking, sexual exploitation, and the violence that women face during crossings and at migration destinations.

Another frequent topic that has received particular attention with the help of studies on international security and studies for peace are the peace promotion activities under the auspices of the UN. The so-called peace operations emerge in local production considering the contribution of many South American countries with military contingents. A regional emblematic case was the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), a peacekeeping operation that occurred in Haiti from 2004 to 2017. UN agents sent as blue helmets – soldiers who perform functions incompatible with their training – often play the role of perpetrators of violence. As some of the analyzed works demonstrate, gender

violence and sexual violence in these conflict scenarios contribute to the resurgence of the tragic local situation.

The effects of militarized masculinities are evident in the perpetration of gender violence. This violence – which is not only expressed through direct, but also psychological and symbolic aggression – expresses itself in the limitations imposed on women in joining the military forces of their countries and becoming agents of national defense actions. On the other hand, the violence has a negative impact on their performance in peace operations, both as military agents and as negotiators. In addition to the cases of Colombia, Haiti and Somalia emerge as topics of interest in the literature of the region.

In efforts to include these marginalized women in international security issues, the UN Security Council approved resolution 1325/2000 and paved the way for the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, which has been the object of study in at least one analyzed work. The importance of this resolution, as well as the subsequent ones, is discussed in articles that deal with local initiatives for the reconstruction of peace. In addition to the agenda that aims to promote the role of women in activities related to the promotion of peace, the SDGs, especially SDG 5, Gender Equality, have also been addressed. It is worth noting that few academic articles dedicated their analysis to the impact of these agendas in the region, which may be an expression of a certain fragility of them in adapting to the realities of the Global South.

Besides the analysis of women, there is an interesting set of articles that aimed to debate questions about masculinities in conflict and peace reconstruction scenarios. Some researchers applied the concept of “hegemonic masculinity”, developed by R. Connell, to investigate aspects such as the exercise of masculinity in armed groups, violence against men, and the possibilities of post-conflict masculinity reconstruction. Therefore, attention is drawn to works that denounce the human rights violations of the LGBTQIA+

population, as well as activism, and the importance of considering their life experiences in moments of reconstruction. Some of these researches brought a gender approach to understand how violence affects and shapes different bodies and subjectivities in distinctive ways.

Additionally, it is important to address some aspects of the articles' theoretical perspectives. As already mentioned, not all works fit the field of International Relations. Some of them derive from International Law, Political Science, Sociology, among other fields of the humanities. Although the authors work with transnational dynamics, they make use of concepts and theories specific to their fields of knowledge.

Furthermore, not all articles attempt and/or claim to adopt a specific theory. The ones on women's experiences have a historiographical character and/or aim to report the events without necessarily offering a theoretical-conceptual analysis. In other articles, the authors indicate the adoption of a gender approach. However, what is observed in many of these cases is that adopting a gender approach or perspective means looking only at women.

Considering those articles with a declared theoretical aspect, few of them offer a post-colonial and decolonial feminist perspective. Research on the experiences of women in conflict scenarios, on violence against indigenous people and, especially, those on the resistance of these subjects, dialogue with the theoretical perspectives of decolonial and postcolonial feminism, as well as with local approaches such as community and peasant feminisms. They shed light on the need to understand the intersections of gender, race, and social class and on how the modern-western patriarchy establishes itself in peripheral contexts. Frequently, these theoretical perspectives are simultaneously adopted and even added to other theories, such as that of Marxist feminism.

Regarding the works that investigate the representations and narratives about women and other gender discussions on the

elaboration of discourses and security agendas, poststructuralist feminism appears as the theoretical perspective adopted by the authors. Based on a discussion of gender as a social and discursive construction (Hansen, 2010), poststructuralist feminist analyses employ discourse analysis, as in the cases of publications on the “war on drugs” discourses (Telles, 2019) and on the images constructed about women in the English-language Arabic media (Lida and Avoine, 2016).

As already explored in this chapter, there is a set of works concerning masculinities. The researchers attempt a rupture with the binary understanding of masculinities and femininities. Thus, they approach poststructuralist and postmodern theories, as they discuss the performances adopted by the actors and the possibility of (re)producing distinct masculinities. These masculinities manifest themselves in a hegemonic way in certain scenarios (e.g., Armed Forces, peace operations) and are generally seen as structures that shape the logics of behavior (Hooper, 1999).

Militarized masculinities are invoked in several works precisely because they are a combination of characteristics linked to masculinities – constructed in the sense of erasing, silencing, or destroying the feminine – and militarism. The latter is marked by the exacerbation of traits considered masculine and links them to the use of force and the practice of violence as necessary attributes in certain institutions of social control (Enloe, 2014), as visibly happens in the Armed Forces, police, and peace operations. Therefore, as an analytical component of a broad notion of gender, masculinities serve as a resource for understanding the contexts of gender violence. It is important to highlight that the studies on masculinities locate them mostly in situations of already established conflicts and not as structures omnipresent in societies, as it happens in the Armed Forces.

Although in smaller numbers, it was possible to identify other theoretical perspectives. Discussions based on postmodern feminism, particularly with the contributions of theorist Judith Butler,

were carried out in an article on prostitution and migrations and in another on the continuity of gender violence against women in Colombia. Some authors have identified themselves with what is presented as liberal feminism, which focuses on women as a universal category: this was the case of a research on sexual violence in peace operations.

Conclusion

The researches relying on the intersection of international security and gender aim to offer multidimensional and multilevel lenses for the understanding of issues and phenomena already addressed by other theories. In South America, there is a growing academic production that brings gender and feminist lenses, from critical approaches, to investigate aspects and dynamics present in conflict and violence scenarios. Throughout this chapter, 75 academic articles were analyzed. They derive from 29 journals in seven South American countries. Publications were searched, filtered, and selected from two databases – *Redalyc* and *Latindex* – and the Publish or Perish software. The main objective was to answer three central questions: a) “is there a focus on regional issues and problems?”; b) “does the research work with decolonial and postcolonial theories?”; and c) “is there an autonomous thinking in the analysis of local issues?”.

Regarding the first question, there is an emerging production directed towards the local problems of the region. The case of the armed conflict and the peace process in Colombia was the most prominent theme in the bibliographic production and illustrates this concern. The literature highlights the Colombian situation for two main reasons. On the one hand, because of the lasting nature of the conflict. On the other, because it is a problem with the potential to affect the reality of various countries in the region, becoming a topic present in the foreign and defense policy guidelines of

governments. Furthermore, the violent Colombian reality, aggravated by the conflict, refers to a pre-existing problem that constitutes a transnational problem in the region: gender violence. The situation of violence against women, gender violence, and femicides is a considerable part of the literature. Generally, this type of violence is highlighted when a gender lens is applied to the realities that cross conflicts.

When it comes to the second question, if the research works with decolonial and postcolonial theories, there is an absence of these approaches. Only eight works, out of the 75 investigated, carried out analyses from decolonial, post-colonial or community and peasant feminist approaches. Despite the themes that deal with different South American realities, the theoretical-epistemological instruments of a local character occupy a marginal place in the analyses. We can point to two main reasons for this finding. Firstly, many of the publications have an interdisciplinary character. Although they approach transnational phenomena, the authors use theoretical and methodological perspectives from other fields of knowledge, such as International Law, Sociology and History. Thus, not all articles work with theories of International Relations.

Secondly, we can interpret this theoretical absence as a result of the late recognition of emerging theories from the Global South. They are usually overlooked because they are part of a critical spectrum that challenges traditional international security lenses, which are still heavily based on neorealist perspectives. Furthermore, given that local theories come from different fields (e.g., philosophy, sociology, anthropology, psychology) and not directly from International Relations, there is a reluctance to incorporate epistemological approaches that challenge the centrality of the State. Although there is a growing interest in shedding light on the gender relations present in the dynamics of war, peace, and conflict in different locations (e.g., Colombia, Haiti, and Somalia), the approaches are still limited to analyzing the women's participation. As a result, many of

the works do not discuss the diversity of the gender term, as well as its role in the construction of diverse, fragmented, and intersectional identities, and omit important problematizations that unfold the concept of gender into an identification of masculinities and femininities as a subjective, discursive, and constituent part of societies.

Finally, on whether there is an autonomous thinking in the analysis of local issues or not, it is argued that there are different efforts for consolidating this local thinking. There is a set of works that address the need for a plural and inclusive approach to understand the heterogeneous South American realities. They call attention to the performance of local actors and the presence of different strategies regarding the confrontation of security problems, considering their international dimensions. It is noteworthy that traditional theories are increasingly showing their limits on providing solid answers. This situation causes an expansion of the “abyssal lines” that separate the southern realities from the theoretical and epistemological theories produced in the Global North.

The need to analyze indigenous, LGBTQIA+, and other actors’ complex realities intensifies the demand for adequate lenses. In this way, it can be concluded that there is an effort to build a South American autonomous thinking to approach security problems, as the transnationality of actors and phenomena affect the bodies and subjectivities of individuals in the Global South differently.

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10.

THE COLOMBIAN PUBLIC FORCE IN PEACEBUILDING: AN ANALYSIS FIVE YEARS AFTER THE PEACE AGREEMENT (2016-2021)¹

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Introduction: the Public Force thinking about the post-agreement period

WHEN THE NEGOTIATION PROCESS WITH THE FARC (in English – Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) came to be official in 2012, the question of the role of the security forces in the context of reaching an agreement became relevant. The FARC were the most important illegal armed group in the country, they had



1 This chapter analyzes the Colombian reality five years after the signing of the peace agreement between the FARC and the Colombian government. It should be noted that this record is due to the fact that the text was written in 2021.

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the strongest contingent of men and firepower, copied a good part of the national peripheral territory, and had a good control of finances derived from drugs and illegal mining (Pizarro, 2018). Therefore, the possibility of their demobilization led to the assessment of a new scenario in the armed conflict, reconfiguring the way in which the Military Forces and the National Police are viewed.

The first idea that should be pointed out is that the Public Force is made up of the National Police and the Military Forces, the latter – in turn – are divided into the Army (land force), Air Force and Navy (naval and fluvial force); all institutions that have been strengthened in recent years. Since 1999, the Military Forces and the National Police developed a strengthening process based on Plan Colombia and the restructuring of the Security and Defense sector. This led to changes in intelligence, organization, equipment, training, and doctrine, leading in turn to a long-term strategic change regarding the internal armed conflict (Vargas, 2010; Pizarro, 2018).

This process of strengthening and consolidation would continue from the following administrations, setting a policy line that would continue permanently until 2012 (Rojas Rivera, 2017). In this way, Leal (2015b) points out:

At the beginning of the Uribe administration, in 2002, its personnel numbered 313,406. Of these, 203,283 corresponded to the Military Forces and 110,123 to the National Police. By the end of that government, in 2010, the Public Force had increased to 426,014: of which 267,629 were from the Military Forces and 158,385 from the National Police. (Para. 15)

This led to an increase in military and police capabilities, but also meant an imbalance in the way in which the security forces were seen amid politics, without this resulting *per se* in a profound change in civil-military relations. In this regard, it is important to note that this would be deepened in the period 2002-2010 in the presidencies of Álvaro Uribe Vélez, in which the Democratic Security Policy and,

subsequently, Democratic Consolidation, would lead to the armed sector being fundamental to the conception of the Colombian State (referred to as deinstitutionalized subordination by Cruz, 2015).

During the internal armed conflict, this strengthening would be important to generate a political scenario favorable to negotiations. It is not possible to speak of an absolute victory around the illegal armed organizations, but it is possible to have as a focus a strategic victory, in the sense that none of the opponents can be eliminated, but the capabilities of the Public Force prevent the achievement of the political objectives of the guerrillas (the takeover of the State; Pizarro, 2018). Likewise, at the time of the negotiations there is a strategic withdrawal of the FARC and the ELN (National Liberation Army) in the face of the advance of state actors.

By 2012, when the negotiations with the FARC began, the Public Force began an internal modernization process (Leal, 2018), which would have important institutional discussions (for or against it). In this scenario, it was necessary to consider the Armed Forces at the time of carrying out the discussions, being one of the combatants in the conflict and having – historically – the greatest influence on security and defense issues² (Vargas, 2010).

Security Forces *per se* are reluctant to any kind of change, even though they know it is necessary in view of the possible disappearance of their main “internal enemy” and the new threats. This has led to various doubts in the sector. Functions, tasks, budget, welfare, organization, judicial system, among others, were some of the issues that were raised within the security institutions, specialized academic spaces and the public. However, despite what many initially

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2 This derived from what has been called the Lleras Doctrine, which granted autonomy to the Armed Forces in matters of security and defense, if they did not interfere in political affairs. This was achieved with the argument that politics was the sphere of discussion, while the military sector was to be the realm of discipline. For this reason, Colombia did not have a strong or prolonged period of military dictatorship.

foresaw about the changes in the sector, there were key issues that were not widely discussed:

First, the Military Forces and the Police participated through personnel within the negotiations, upon invitation of the national government. However, these institutions were part of the “untouchables” within the dialogues; in other words, their structures were not the subject of discussion within the post-agreement process.

Second, the transformations had to take place internally, given that within the Forces (and institutionally) the discourse of victory was managed (Pizarro, 2018). The fact that the negotiations were made decreased the executive capacity to generate external changes, since many considered it as a sign that they had been defeated.

Third, despite the expectations of many sectors regarding the release of budget allocated to security and defense, in a short time there was a consensus that there could not be a decrease in spending, given that: most of it went to pay the institution’s personnel and a post-agreement scenario would require greater capacities to be able to face the new threats (Vargas, 2015b; Pizarro, 2018).

Fourth, in correlation with the above, no major changes were discussed regarding common aspects and that could generate reluctance from the sector: number of personnel, special military justice (military criminal jurisdiction – Justicia Penal Militar), organization and belonging to the Ministry of Defense, special regime (health and pension), among others.

Issues such as organization, operationalization, and doctrine did not become themes of political discussion. However, internally there is an awareness that the possible signature demands transformations that cannot be avoided. In this regard, a more conservative sector sought to continue many of the dynamics brought by the Forces, which they considered could be effective in the post-agreement period; while others proposed a more progressive approach that projected the change of roles and missions. There were few radical transformations, and they took place in a conjunctural manner,

while changes were made through reforms that were focused on significant long-term evolution.

Process of adaptation of the Public Force to a new context

Security threats and challenges: beyond the guerrillas

The way in which institutions develop will depend on the context in which they find themselves. Thus, it is necessary to consider the problems that the Public Forces must face in the post-agreement scenario, to show the configuration adopted.

At first, regarding the threats that can be found in the post-agreement, Borrero (2017, p.85-86) makes an adequate description regarding a scenario in which:

The likely threats to Colombia are wide-ranging. They come from the geopolitical environment, from economic interests originating in illegal businesses handled by a powerful international crime, from internal social and political crises, from massive and uncontrolled migrations growing in the world, and less likely but possible, threats from terrorism derived from conflicts originating in other scenarios of the world, but constituted in globalized conflicts, whose waves can reach the regional environment of the country.

This author makes an important collection of what in this new post-agreement scenario, in which various factors converge, must be considered at the time of transforming the Public Force. It is noteworthy that it is complex, broad, and diverse, so that the reconfiguration of these institutions must be committed to manage a new way of understanding national security.

Thus, Borrero (2017) emphasizes that, although the guerrillas were an important threat to national security, it was not the only one,

but it led to the others occupying a second place. Thus, the challenge in the post-agreement would not only consist of dealing with what has been called the “new threats”, but it is necessary to make an important correlation with those that were relegated in the agenda.

Post-agreement scenarios bring with them important repercussions in security issues (Vargas, 2015b), as well as entail facing externalities derived from the process (Borrero, 2017). Within these aspects, territorial consolidation, and the entry of the State into the territories is considered a fundamental challenge, being the Public Force one of the few institutions with capacities, in addition to being the first contact that seeks to establish with the territories to accommodate the rest of Colombian organizations (Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, 2015; 2019).

Secondly, the post-agreement opens a new context in terms of citizen security and coexistence, given that this had been a secondary issue on the public agenda in the face of the importance of the internal armed conflict (Muñoz and Sánchez, 2015). Thus, as the negotiations were being carried out, the national government became aware of the need to address this issue as a central one, given a scenario of a possible increase in social conflicts at the civilian level. Thus:

Conceptually, the guidelines for Citizen Security and Coexistence must be specified, differentiated from National Defense and Security. This implies giving relevance to the issue of Citizen Security and Coexistence – especially due to the background of the NDPs [National Development Plans] of the previous governments since 1990 (Gaviria, Samper, Pastrana, Uribe I, Uribe II and Santos I) in which National Security was subordinated; in Santos II’s NDP “Todos por un nuevo país” (2014–2018), an increase in the importance of Citizen Security is evident, but the differentiation between National Security and Citizen Security is still blurred. (Vargas and Rondón, 2018, para. 2)

In this way, it became evident that a new security scenario should not be focused solely on the perspectives of national security and defense; rather, in a new more democratic scenario, citizen security and coexistence would occupy the main place on the agenda.

The above can be derived from three key ideas: One, the need to change a contact with citizens based on national security to another focused-on citizen security in peripheral territories (Velásquez, 2015). Two, silencing the guns allows social demands to be heard, including those related to the security of their communities. Three, the reconfiguration of crime after the disappearance of the main armed groups determines confrontations for empty spaces, which should not only be addressed militarily, but also based on coexistence and reconstruction of the social relations.

In this context, it is important to address the main transformations developed by the forces, having a new construction that allows analyzing their role in peacebuilding, with the objective of seeing the changes made in contrast with the challenges faced after the signing of the 2016 Agreement.

The task of changing the conception of the enemy – doctrine

The National Security Doctrine had a differential impact on the Latin American region. This is defined as

a military macro-theory of the State and of the functioning of society, which explains the importance of the “occupation” of state institutions by the military. [...] The doctrine took shape around a series of principles that led to consider most social problems as subversive manifestations. (Leal, 2002, p.1)

In Colombia’s case, the continuation of the internal armed conflict has meant that Cold War thinking persists in institutions and society. Hence, the “internal manifestations” become an internal

enemy that must be confronted. Therefore, despite its decline (Leal, 2002), the National Security Doctrine continues to impact social conceptions in general.

This includes the Public Force which, even without having interfered directly in politics – unlike its South American peers –, developed mechanisms related to the National Security Doctrine, by means of which it relegated sectors it considered close to subversive groups (especially FARC before its demobilization and the ELN) or changed its actions in the provision of services. In this way, social groups such as indigenous people, Afro-Colombians, students, peasants, and several peripheral populations, as well as acts that disagreed with the established order (such as protesting), were stigmatized by the Military Forces and the Police.

The post-agreement implied internal transformations in the way certain social sectors were viewed to move towards more democratic forms of service delivery. In this way, the security forces would try to bring about a process of greater social proximity. This was included in the proposals for a new interrelation with rural areas by the National Police, as well as in the Army's transformation plans based on the concept of "Multimission Force" (Rondón, 2021a; 2021b).

Likewise, in the official format of the Public Force and the Ministry of Defense, since 1999 with Andrés Pastrana's Development Plan, a discourse of development and its correlation with the Military Forces and the Police has been handled. However, this would be deepened in the new stage, considering both forces as a fundamental part of reaching the territories and generating a greater interrelation with the community (Martín, 2017).

Nevertheless, even though in academic circles the treatment of citizens was one of the fundamental axes of the discussion regarding the transformation of the Public Force; the reality is that in the military and police fields these issues were not determinant at the time of their internal discussions. The institutional management of these problems has developed in a different way and has been

resolved more in contact with the citizen than by strategic lines dictated by the leadership. In that order of ideas, the post-agreement *per se* brought changes within the interrelation of non-uniformed citizens with uniformed ones (although incipiently), generating new dynamics that are seen at the institutional level.

However, doctrinally, the forces were aware of the need for transformation. On the one hand, the National Army adopted the “Damascus Doctrine”, in the search to update, position and project the institution nationally, internationally and understanding a new context of threats (Ardila et al., 2018). This would tend to an operational preparation for a scenario in which the Military Forces would be present in the territories, while possessing a versatility to face the various threats (Rojas, 2017), in the pursuit of peace, security and development of the nation (Ejército Nacional de Colombia, 2017).

The idea of the Military Forces is to have the necessary versatility to face the challenges that future operations present. Likewise, it draws attention to the learning from previous moments in its history, from which it tries to reinforce acquired capabilities, as well as to improve performance in others.

On the other hand, the National Police has a permanent process of updating its doctrine, which focuses on deepening the dynamics of citizen security (Rondón, 2021a). However, this is an unfinished process derived from the internal armed conflict and the legacy of the National Security Doctrine. Even so, the doctrinal progress of the Police is significant at the institutional level, allowing it to generate new relations with society, while approaching its constitutional duty.

Roles and missions: a great debate within the Public Force

Another aspect that changes circumstantially would be the roles and missions that the security forces would perform in the post-agreement period. The disappearance of the main threat in the expectation

of dialogues with the FARC and the ELN leads to a reconsideration of who performs certain operations (Leal, 2015b; Vargas, 2015b).

The internal armed conflict has led to the existence in Colombia of a Military Forces and a National Police with diffuse roles in practice (Mejías, 2015), even though since the Colombian Constitution of 1991 (currently in force) a differentiation was made between the two (Vargas, 2010). However, in the same National Charter, the term “Public Force”, which includes both institutions, shows a civilian disregard for security and defense.

Autonomously, the Military Forces (Torrijos et al., 2018) and the National Police (Casas, 2005; Ortega, 2008; Ortega et al. 2011) have carried out internal processes of missionary updating, despite the lack of knowledge in these areas by civilian authorities. Both, due to their performance in their tasks, have adapted and developed the best models according to their capabilities.

However, a notable difference between the Military Forces and the Police derives from the fact that: The first, due to the internal armed conflict and the low apparent external threat in the country, has had a greater involvement in internal and transnational tasks (Comando General de las Fuerzas Militares, 2015; Torrijos et al. 2018), leaving aside the “traditional” tasks of an Army, aimed at the defense of the territory and sovereignty. The second, despite the counter-reform³ processes (Casas, 2005), through relations with the non-uniformed society, has reduced its militarization and have been more integrated in civilian ways for the service to citizen security (Rondón, 2021a).

Expectations were high regarding the possibility that the Military Forces would be trained for “traditional” national security and defense

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3 Term developed to refer to the setbacks generated after a reform process has been carried out (in the case of the National Police, those of 1993 and 2003), due to the lack of leadership from the civil authority and the return to its referents within the institution (Casas, 2005).

tasks, while the Police increased its margin in civilian tasks of citizen security and coexistence (Vargas, 2015a). In fact, the National Army coined the concept of Multimission Army, as a search for a way out of a Counterinsurgent Army (Ciro and Correa, 2014). Thus, this new conception aims to face contingencies and train an Army capable of acting in various fields of action, beyond national security (Comando de Transformación del Ejército del Futuro y Fundación Ideas para la Paz, 2018; Gonzales and Betancourt, 2018).

The idea of a Multimission Army is the way to update an entire operational framework to a new reality. However, in practice, the Colombian Army is trained to fulfill such missions, given that they were already performing them before the post-agreement was thought of (an Army for the development of the country). With the Multimission Army, the military sector justifies its size (the second largest in Latin America after the Brazilian Army), capacity in wide fields and importance for the country.

As for the National Police, its transformation process was based on addressing unresolved demands of the institution. In this regard, three fronts can be mentioned: One, coexistence and citizen security, which had been relegated by the internal armed conflict and that, in a post-agreement scenario, would take on special relevance in the face of the mutation of illegal phenomena (Dirección General-Oficina de Planeación, 2015). With this objective, it seeks to deepen the National Model of Community Surveillance by Quadrants, from which is sought a greater centralization in the communities and in crime prevention.

Two, the historical debt of the Police with the rural sector, which has not been seen from the perspective of citizen security but from the logic of the internal armed conflict (Velásquez, 2015; Ávila and Castro, 2016; Rondón, 2021b). In this regard, the idea of creating a third force to deal with gray zones was rejected (Mejías, 2016) and initially sought to strengthen the Carabineros and Rural Security Directorate, increasing its personnel and opening new institutional

capacities such as forest rangers (Policía Nacional de Colombia, 2017). Although this new agenda aimed at generating results in the long term, the reality is that there must be a complete institutional reconsideration regarding rurality in the country and the management that has been given to it by the National Police.

Three, one of the most critical points of discussion has to do with the interrelationship between the National Police and the Military Forces. In the case of Colombia, in addition to both forces being under the concept of Public Force (constitutionally), the Ministry of Defense is in charge of both, so they are directly related, being the only Latin American police under this ministry (Llorente, 2013; Casas et al., 2018).

The departure of the Police from the Ministry of Defense was considered in different spheres as a possibility for the post-agreement, based on a new institutional framework within which the creation of a Ministry of Citizen Security was considered (Llorente, 2013; Vargas, 2015a). This is because there must be a gradual shift away from military conceptions to face the challenges posed by this new scenario (Llorente, 2013).

However, this is an unfinished debate given that it is considered that the organization of the defense sector facilitates the interrelation of the different forces to confront the new threats (Dirección General-Oficina de Planeación, 2015). Likewise, incremental advances have been made involving greater inertia between the Ministry of Defense and the Ministries of the Interior and Justice (Departamento Nacional de Planeación, 2011).

Organizationally, it should be clarified that the Public Force designed institutions to think about how to carry out the post-agreement, among which the following stand out: in the National Army the Army Transformation Command of the Army of the Future (COTEF) and in the National Police the Police Unit for Peace Building. Both were units that allowed the design of institutional actions for the post-agreement.

A renewed Public Force in the quest for peace

The transformations to be achieved within the security forces were major (although they were implemented gradually, understanding the possibility of counter-reform that could be generated) and were focused on addressing the new context of peace. Thus, different transformations were generated in preparation for this scenario. A relevant (and novel) aspect with respect to the consideration of peace was that Colombia was attuned to characterizing peace building in a global and not only national way, considering the country's participation as vital in different international scenarios.

It is in this way that, both in the National Police and in the Military Forces, the possibility of "Exporting Security" ("Exportar Seguridad") began to be built from what has been called "Diplomacy for Defense and Security" ("Diplomacia para la Defensa y la Seguridad") (Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, 2015; 2019). In this way, there have been approaches and participation in United Nations missions (specifically Peace Missions, among which are Yugoslavia, Cambodia, Mozambique, El Salvador, Haiti, Guinea Bissau, among others; Policía Nacional de Colombia, 2020) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (with which international missions were carried out, trying to achieve the status of Global Partner, which was recognized in 2017; Rondón et al. 2019), striving to contribute to international peace building.

Meanwhile, at the national level, it is noteworthy that the Public Forces are a fundamental part of peacebuilding, either because of their participation amid the conflict or because of their ample personnel capacity. The Armed Forces and the Police, with international accompaniment, will oversee guaranteeing the security of the zones left behind by the armed groups after the negotiations, as well as of the demobilized members of these organizations.

In the same way, in correlation with the peace process that is being carried out, it is noteworthy that the Public Force (each of the

institutions that integrate them with their own processes) decided to be part of the organizations that sought to reconstruct the events that took place during the internal armed conflict. Thus, different compilations, reports and investigations began to be carried out within the Armed Forces and the National Police to clarify the events that took place and to have a historical memory.

This was accompanied by the search for legal mechanisms to be able to establish an adequate legal defense in the eventual processes for the facts committed during the conflict. This led to a strengthening of the legal conceptions within the actions of the forces, which resulted in the deepening of the "Operational Law" in the case of the Military Forces, while the Police sought an adaptation to new realities such as the "National Code of Police and Coexistence". This was built around a context of peace, in which the actions of the forces sought to adhere more and more to national and international parameters.

Five years after the Peace Agreement with the FARC: responses from the Colombian Security Forces

After the transformations carried out by the Public Force, it is stated that these have been incremental, but they have not developed with the same speed with which society has required them. This is due to, first, the post-agreement has brought strong changes in Colombian society, which had been brewing before the Havana agreement was reached. Second, a non-uniformed civilian leadership has not been generated to carry out the required transformations; on the contrary, there have been important setbacks. Finally, the security scenario has not been the desirable one; there are still vicissitudes related to the internal armed conflict in the face of the growing capacity of the Organized Armed Groups.

This section presents the main challenges faced by the Public Forces after the signing of the Havana agreement, including all the

externalities derived from processes that were not considered. The purpose of this is to understand the role of the Armed Forces and the National Police in the construction of strategies that will lead to positive peace (not only negative peace).

Thus, the first scenario that emerges is related to territorial control, which was not carried out as expected. The reality is that the Public Forces did not control the territories left by the FARC, there was no clear symbiosis with the demobilized guerrillas, nor was there an establishment for rapid action in the territories.

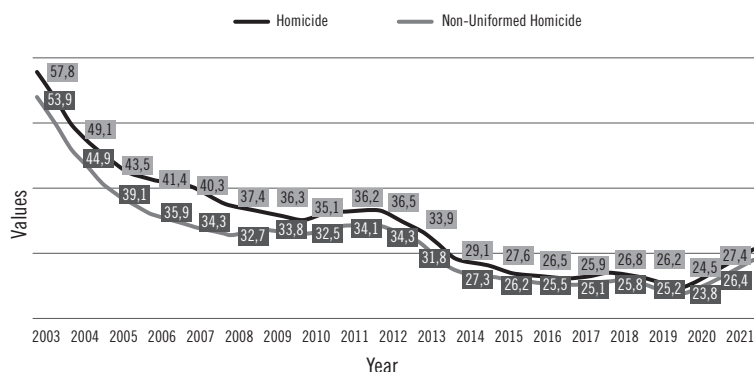
Thus, a reconfiguration of criminality took place because of disputes over the empty spaces left by the FARC guerrillas. It led to a takeover by the GAOs, within which the national government identified: the ELN guerrillas, the Clan del Golfo (a group that became the most important illegal armed organization in the country), Los Pelusos (or EPL dissidents), Los Puntilleros and the residual GAOs (within which are the FARC dissidents;⁴ Ministry of National Defense, 2019).

Over time, these groups found themselves immersed in a dynamic dispute for new strategic spaces, among which the following stand out: to the east, the border with Venezuela (especially the departments of Norte de Santander and Arauca), to the west, the access to the Pacific Ocean, to the northwest, the Urabá area, and to the south, the coca-growing territories. There is also an important struggle for the internal chains of production and commercialization of drugs, which range from plantation to consumption (which are in

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4 Both the FARC and EPL dissidences derive from groups of individuals who were not included in the negotiation process or the way in which the implementation of the agreements was taking place. In the case of the FARC, this has been a gradual process of a minority that is not reflected in the way it has been carried out or the content of the 2016 Peace Agreement, while the process with the EPL took place in 1991 and the disarticulation of most of the organization took place. It should be noted that, in both cases, they have not been able to generate a level of institutionalism as they had in the past, and they are far from achieving unity, territorial control, number of men, and firepower equal to the original ones at the time of their negotiation.

FIGURE 1 – COLOMBIA HOMICIDE RATE, 2003-2021



Note: Adapted from Ministry of National Defense data.

convergence or dispute with the actions of the Gangs and Armed Criminal Groups).

In this way, at first there was a decrease in the homicide rate at the national level (Figure 1), covering the first two years of the agreement. However, as time went by, it became evident that this trend was not configured in the same way at the territorial level. Llorente (2021) mentions this as:

[...] the deterioration of security reflected in the sustained increase since 2018 in homicides, threats to social leaders, massacres and forced displacements. This situation is associated with rearrangements and disputes between armed groups such as the ELN, the Clan del Golfo and dissident groups of the extinct FARC, for the control of illegal rents, as well as the lack of an adequate strategy by the government to contain the violent dynamics in these territories. (Para. 10, translated)

Thus, an initial trend that had conflict-affected populations at its center had a setback with an increase in violence in coca-producing municipalities after 2016 (Garzón, 2017). The dynamics of violence in the post-agreement period have been concentrated in both

quantity and intensity in certain territories, despite the national reduction in the homicide rate.

In this manner, it can be referenced that the milestones regarding the highest homicide rate in recent years in Colombia have occurred in 1991 (84.2 per 100 thousand inhabitants) and in 2002 (77 per 100 thousand inhabitants); in the first year due to disputes driven by drug cartels and, in the second, derived from a strong military offensive due to the advance of the guerrillas.

After 2002, there is a decreasing trend with vicissitudes in 2011 and 2012 (according to data from the Colombian Ministry of National Defense), due to a readjustment of illegal forces and the need to adapt the Democratic Security Policy (2002-2010) to the new context (Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, 2011). This significant reduction between 2002 and 2010 has among its causes the adaptation of the Public Forces to face the different threats to Colombian security. However, this took place through a significant increase in the death of uniformed personnel, which increased between 2003-2007, with a gradual reduction since 2008, which would be deepened by the negotiations and, consequently, the peace agreement between the government and the FARC (Figure 1).

Colombia went from having disproportionate levels in terms of homicide rate, to being within what can be considered the margin of a Latin American country (understanding it as a region with endemic violence, higher than that of the rest of the world; Perea, 2019). This led to the fact that, in 2016, the year of the signing of the peace agreement with the FARC, a historic figure was reached in the homicide rate: 26.5. Nevertheless, this was not only due to the negotiation with the armed groups, but also to the role played by the security forces since their reformulation in 1999.

Still, despite the great expectations generated by the 2016-2020 figures in terms of the homicide rate, 2021 and early 2022 were particularly problematic years for peacebuilding. In 2018 and 2019

there was already a significant attrition in terms of the possibilities for the State forces to reach the territories.

The Public Force was unable to exercise territorial control in the most remote areas of the country, while the illegal armed groups were recomposing themselves and designing new strategies to advance to capture illegal revenues. At the same time, the territories quickly became involved in transnational crime disputes, which advanced more quickly than those carried out by the Armed Forces and the National Police.

It became evident that it was necessary to bring civilian institutions to the territories, preceded by the actions of the Armed Forces (Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, 2019). However, in the government of Iván Duque insufficient efforts have been made, which are added to the fact that illicit crops, the presence of armed groups and unsatisfied demands, have been solved with an increase in the foot of force in the regions (especially in areas such as the South Pacific, Catatumbo and Arauca).

The difficulties increased exponentially due to the violence that was being generated in the territories, the reconfiguration of criminality (which began to affect urban areas with greater intensity) and the distribution of empty spaces. In this context, the year 2020 saw the COVID-19 pandemic, which shifted the attention of the Public Forces to the reconfiguration of threats (in this case a biological risk) and the possibility of its use as a broad network of state support in the most remote territories (Vargas and Rondón, 2020a).

The pandemic led the state institutions to respond to this new threat, delaying the implementation of the agreements and reducing the capacities of the security forces in relation to peacebuilding. It accelerated the dispute for territorial control among illegal armed groups in the face of a strategic withdrawal derived from the new context, which, in turn, led to a new relationship with the illegal economy (Vargas and Rondón, 2020b). In this way, Vargas and Rondón (2020b) point out that:

These aggravating factors have led the illegal armed groups to face a scenario of competition and consolidation accelerated by the circumstances, with the State busy attending to the demands derived from the pandemic, scarce resources to feed their armed structures, closed markets and the increase in gold prices. The confrontation and its acceleration are due to this new reorganization in a post-FARC structural scenario, but also in view of a post-pandemic conjunctural context. (Para. 18, translated)

Thus, the construction of peace was limited by the pandemic in a conjunctural manner, without implying that there were no delays prior to the arrival of the coronavirus in the country.

Despite the perspectives and the efforts made by the security forces, they have been insufficient to cope with the new social context, especially if we understand the continuation of violence in certain areas of the country. The security of demobilized combatants has not been completely guaranteed; on the contrary, according to the United Nations (2022), 303 ex-combatants have been murdered, as of January 13, 2022; likewise, the areas subject to the Development Programs with a Territorial Approach⁵ have been increasing their numbers of violent deaths (Garzón, 2020).

Another data are the massacres that have occurred in the post-agreement period, which have been compiled by the Institute of Studies for Development and Peace (INDEPAZ), noting that in 2020 there were 91 of these events, while in 2021 there were 96 cases reported. These figures become more worrisome when in January 2022 alone there were 13 events, when in the previous two years there were only six (in each year; INDEPAZ, 2022).

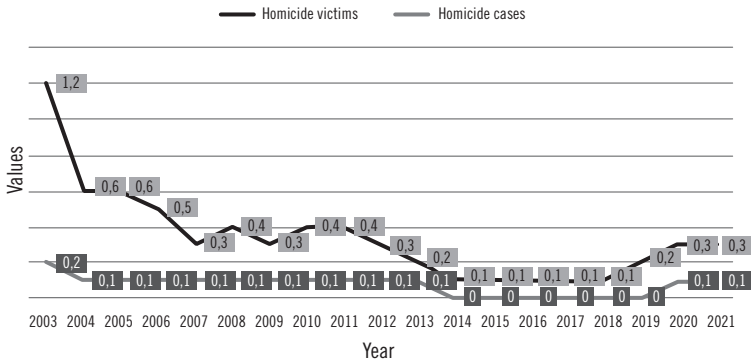
This is also related to the lack of knowledge of these events based on the name of collective homicides, which seek to minimize the name given to them under the international system as massacres.

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5 They are an instrument that seeks to promote rural development in the areas affected by the conflict based on a 15-year plan.

This generates an underreporting by the Ministry of Defense, which discards many of the events that occurred. Despite this, Figure 2 shows that there has been an increase since 2019 in the number of “collective homicides” and their victims, without generating clear mechanisms that allow the resolution of this problem that affects the main territories affected by the armed conflict (among which the departments of Cauca, Antioquia and Valle del Cauca stand out).

FIGURE 2 – COLLECTIVE HOMICIDE RATE, 2003-2021



Note: Adapted from Ministry of National Defense data.

Nonetheless, violence has not only materialized in the points mentioned, but the post-agreement has brought with it new possibilities for the expansion of Colombian democracy. This caused social organizations to emerge or consolidate around the national territory, being especially important in the territories affected by the internal armed conflict.

However, these quickly found themselves against processes of violence and in favor of the implementation of the peace agreements, being an obstacle for different armed organizations trying to carry out territorial control. Due to this, it has been reported, according to the Defensoría del Pueblo, the shocking figure of 898 human rights defenders and social leaders killed between 2016 and

2021, with the most affected departments being Antioquia, Cauca, and Valle del Cauca, coinciding with the places where massacres occur (Report 753 social leaders killed in Colombia from 2016 to 2020, and 145 in 2021; Defensoría del Pueblo, 2022).

In this perspective, it is possible to speak of a continuation of the violence of the internal armed conflict, which is worrying given the possibility of a return to the levels of violence prior to the negotiations. Likewise, the security forces have had to face a permanent challenge of updating to enable them to deal with the new ways in which crime is occurring at the national level. Within these dynamics, the year 2021 presented the highest number of murders of members of the Military Forces and the Police in the last five years (between 2019-2021 more than 280 uniformed personnel have died, with more than 110 cases reported in the last year alone), as well as a number not seen since 2017 with more than 814 uniformed personnel injured in acts of service and more than 84 reported kidnappings (Jules, 2021).

In the case of the Military Forces, as mentioned, they had a clear perspective in terms of achieving their articulation in a new context that would allow them to transition from a counterinsurgent Army to a deterrent defensive one (Pizarro, 2018). However, many of these changes were obstructed in the face of the recurrence of the circumstances of violence that the country is experiencing.

In addition to the coronavirus, it is necessary to have as an externality the migration of Venezuelans around the national territory, a process that was not considered in the negotiation because of: first, the non-correlation of the phenomenon at first with the violence in the country, and second, the diaspora took place especially after 2015, when the dialogues were already advanced (IEPRI Unal, 2022).

Currently, it is now necessary to see this factor as fundamental for understanding Colombian security, given that: One, Venezuelan migrants also demand that the Colombian state maintain certain

margins in terms of security. Two, the difficult economic situations of migrants and the presence of illegal armed groups on the borders make them vulnerable to violence. Three, the coincidence of increased crime and violence with the arrival of Venezuelans has led to a general stigmatization by Colombian society. Four, Venezuelans became part of the groups marginalized by the Public Forces, which, despite the needs they report as a social group, has led them to be belittled in terms of their integrity amid the processes, even leading to comments about a possible differential attention with respect to other citizens (Vargas and Rondón, 2021).

This leads to the need to increase the capacities of the Public Force in peace building in a context where there is a new population, which must have the same protection as the rest of the Colombian citizens. Likewise, the updating in terms of the form of attention (and not control) to the migrant population must be imperative to change the way in which their service is provided.

Finally, in this context, many of the perspectives regarding the post-agreement have been frustrated: there has not been a sufficient correlation between the non-uniformed civilian and the Public Force, there are no continuous and joint institutional efforts to achieve an interrelation for the implementation of the peace agreement, there has not been an adequate generational replacement in the Forces to address the new realities and the planned change of missions and roles has not occurred.

Conclusions: prospective scenarios regarding the Public Force and peacebuilding

There is a clear concern about the return of the cycles of violence of Colombia's internal armed conflict. Circumstances appear to be favorable for this to occur given a lack of implementation of the agreement, difficulties due to the impossibility of substituting

illegal economies and the continuation of conflict-related dynamics. Likewise, the strengthening of the ELN and the lack of interest of the current national government (Iván Duque, 2018-2022) in a negotiation with this armed organization (and with others), has led to contexts that are not very conducive to turning the page of the war.

In this way, the conflict has continued and the longed-for complete peace, despite having been determined as a long-standing process, still seems distant. Violations have mutated, armed organizations have moved away from political ideals, their relations with transnational crime have increased, and illegal economic networks have been strengthened. Thus, the dynamics of violence has continued in a structural manner, raising the question of whether this is the same context as before the agreement.

The answer to this question is no. There are important differences in terms of the way in which the violence has been carried out. There are important differences in the way circumstances have developed, which constitute a new security environment in the post-agreement period that changes the way peace is built.

First, the threats are atomized and not completely identified; derived from the configuration process that is taking place permanently in the territories due to the dispute over illicit rents. Contrary to what happened in previous lustrums, now crime and illegal groups are no longer characterized or centralized based on guerrilla or paramilitary organizations, but there is a process in which they are versatile, articulated in different ways and do not stand out for their political ideals.

Second, there is a society with a process of change that is more agile than the progress made at the institutional level. In this order of ideas, citizens in general have begun to have experiences that escape from the inherited forms of the conflict, carrying out a process of democratic opening within which unsatisfied demands are included. However, the institutional framework has not progressed

in the same way, which has widened the gap with respect to the unresolved demands in the country.

Third, there were new social perspectives demanding compliance with the peace accords. Within the framework of the 2021 protests, it was found that the sectors affected by the conflict were demanding a prompt implementation of what was agreed, making this an issue on the agenda that was changing their perspective. Likewise, it was noteworthy that within the framework of the discourse of the 2022 presidential candidates, a consensus was found regarding the need to comply with the former combatants, as well as other points of the agenda (the point of greatest tension between political sectors was found with respect to justice).

Fourth, there is an important change in the political conception of security. The transformation of the context has led to a new dynamic within the country's political processes, which was demonstrated in the 2022 elections, in which there was a new term for president and congress. What stands out in this regard is that the demand regarding the guerrilla groups does not seem to be the first or the only one in the security framework, on the contrary, there are many issues that are sought to be addressed, without a higher order of priority and that consciously include aspects such as: social protest (derived from the increase that has occurred in its manifestation after 2018), citizen security, the implementation of the agreement, the peace negotiations with the ELN, transnational crime, among others. This is representative to the extent that it has allowed a democratic and institutional opening regarding security issues in the country.

Finally, there are external factors that influence the development of the country. Among them, the most notable is the migration of Venezuelans, which has slowed down in the last period, but has left an important social network that must be responded to from the institutional level. Likewise, the pandemic has generated complex dynamics in terms of security, leading to an acceleration of the conditions that were developing since the demobilization of the FARC.

Thus, the main conclusion in terms of the Public Force is derived from the previous points, understanding that peace building is a complex and versatile process, which is not excluded from the social dynamics that are volatile and rapidly changing. The Public Force is a set of institutions that has made important transformations; however, these have not occurred with the same speed as society has changed, leading to the fact that, despite the efforts, the gap has not been reduced as desired; on the contrary, the increase in demand has been disproportionate to the increase in supply.

In the last five presidential terms, until the end of 2021, the Security Policy has been maintained through the precepts proposed by the so-called Democratic Security, which gave a structure to the military and police offensive. However, it is necessary to make a change in terms of the dimension of how the security issue is addressed and, therefore, the way in which the Public Force continues to be permanently built.

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Nine years after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda by the United Nations General Assembly, international politics faces abundant challenges that pose a risk to the implementation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

This period has been defined by structural obstacles to development, rising inequality, threats to democracy, obstructions to international cooperation, a global pandemic, armed conflicts, and interstate wars. Latin America is profoundly affected by these dynamics, but also encounters specific challenges. In this context, the selection of articles collected in this volume analyzes these issues through the lens of international relations, especially security and regionalism, considering the interaction between local and global factors.



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